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LITERARY STUDIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

Special Issue Editors

Dr. V. REMA | Dr. K. NAGAMANI

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CONVENOR'S NOTE

The Department of English and Foreign Languages, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Ramapuram is immeasurably grateful to the management and Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Sciences, India for their unflinching support in our research expedition.

In this third year of collaborative endeavour of the One Day Online International Conference entitled, "New Approaches in Language Teaching, Literary Studies and Cultural Studies", with Bodhi, we have received a laudable number of research articles from the research scholars and faculty members of various institutions, across the country, in English, German, French and Japanese languages.

Scanned through the critical acumen of elite editors, sieved through their meticulous review, the papers have come out as a compendium of exploration and experimentation in the various domains of language and literature pertaining to the central concept of the conference,

We are extremely thankful to all the contributors for their valuable insights and discernment.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Literature is a journey into the realms of creativity, imagination and experience of life in its variety, vivacity and vibrance. Language, in turn is the most efficacious tool of expression of the mind and the soul of the author and the reader. The One Day Online International Conference entitled, “New Approaches in Language Teaching, Literary Studies and Cultural Studies” is organized in collaboration with Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

The research articles in this compilation provide a kaleidoscopic view of various authors and books and theories being analyzed through critical perspectives that hone research pursuits. We are sure that this edition will facilitate further research in the domains sought after, through a plethora of deeper insights and information. With due reverence and gratitude, we appreciate the valuable knowledge dissemination of the contributors and the innumerable minds to be ignited by its perusal in the future.

ABOUT THE EDITORS



Dr. REMA V Heads the Department of English & Foreign Languages for nearly a decade at the Ramapuram Campus. With nearly close of three decades of teaching experience at the collegiate level, she evinces keen interest to learn the latest technologies which can be applied to the field of Language & Linguistics in order to keep her updated in the emerging trends in her domain. She loves to be amidst young students and never hesitates to learn from the digital natives. She supervises research scholars at the Ph.D level, has participated in conferences as Resource person and published journal articles in reputed journals.



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Academic Excellence in research is sustained by promoting research support for young Scholars. Our Journal on Humanities, Arts and Science of research is motivating all aspects of encounters across disciplines and research fields in a multidisciplinary view, by assembling research groups and consequently projects, supporting publications with this inclination and organizing programmes. Internationalization of research work is the unit seeks to develop its scholarly profile in research through quality of publications. And visibility of research is creating sustainable platforms for research and publication, such as series of books; motivating dissemination of research results for people and society.

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TALES OF LOVE AND LORE: THE INTERPLAY OF MAGIC REALISM AND TRADITION IN EASTERINE KIRE'S *DON'T RUN, MY LOVE*

LULU

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Abstract

Easterine Kire Iralu is a prominent voice in Naga literature, and she is admired for her creativity in poetry, novels, and short stories. She was born in 1959, at Kohima, the capital of Nagaland and one of the pioneering English language authors from the Northeastern region of India. As a prolific woman writer and Naga novelist, Kire's works have a close bearing with her Naga culture, tradition and values which has an undeniable mark on her works that springs from her inner perspective of ethnicity and values that were instilled in her. . Some of her major works includes A Naga Village Remembered, A Terrible Matriarchy, Mari, Life on Hold, When the River Sleeps, Bitter Wormwood, Don't Run, My Love, etc. The paper will analyze and discuss the elements of Magic Realism and explore how Kire incorporates Naga legends and supernatural aspects into the storyline in her novel Don't Run, My Love. It will also analyze tales of love and lore through the protagonist journey as Kire weaves Naga folklore and traditions into the narrative.

Keywords: magic realism, supernatural, kire, naga literature, naga legends

Introduction

Easterine Kire is a poet, short stories writer and a novelist from Nagaland. She stands out as one of the most exceptional storytellers hailing from the region, having authored numerous books in English, comprising three volumes of poetry and short stories. Her debut novel, *A Naga Village Remembered* was the first ever Naga novel to be published. Kire has been deeply engaged in endeavors aimed at fostering improved prospects for the Naga youth, as well as preserving and promoting Naga folktales. She holds a significant place in Naga literature. Her contributions have been profound, marking her as a pivotal figure in shaping and preserving the literary heritage of the Naga people. Magic Realism is a literary genre that blends elements of magical or fantastical elements with realistic settings, characters, and events. In Magic Realism, the extraordinary is presented in a matter of fact, seamlessly integrated into the everyday world, which

creates a sense of ambiguity between what is real and what is imagined.

Kire's work often exhibits elements of magic realism, where she intertwines mystical or supernatural elements with the everyday lives of her characters, by incorporating elements such as folklore, myth, and spiritual beliefs into her narratives. Kire creates a narrative space where the boundaries between the seen and the unseen worlds blur, mirroring the interconnectedness of nature, spirituality, and daily life in Naga society.

The novel *Don't Run, My Love* is about Visenuo and her young marriageable daughter Atuonuo. Their lives are hard regulated by the seasons and by the ceaseless annual labours of hoeing and digging, planting and harvesting. Soon a young hunter name Kevi enters their lives during harvest time offering help and in the mean time Kevi falls in love with Atuonuo and proposes marriage. However Atuonuo young in years and unsure of her heart turns him down. However love becomes menacing when Kevi,

angered by the rejection, viciously turns on Atuonuo and reveals a side of him that neither mother nor daughter could have imagined in their worst nightmares. And thus, through the use of element of supernatural Kire weaves the tales of love and lore in the novel.

Naga folklore is replete with supernatural beings like spirits, deities, and mythical creatures. Animism and shamanism are integral to Naga belief systems, with rituals performed to appease spirits and seek their blessings for prosperity and protection, “the Naga ancestors believed in the existence of lesser gods and spirits such as: the god of wealth, the fertility, the ancestors, the tigers, the fruitfulness, spirit of the hills, the stone, the house spirit. From time to time, animal sacrifices were offered to them for blessing and protection from ill health for the family.” (Shikhu, 14) through this belief system Kire drew inspiration into her fiction giving life to her characters and story lines. Through these folklores, it becomes easy to understand more of her works and depicts real life situations in her novel.

It is from this same timeless and undefined space that Kevi enters into their lives. He was described as “anyone who set eyes on him, man or woman, young or old, had to admit that he was a beautiful creature indeed, the young man who called himself Kevi and who walked into the lives of two women at harvest time.” (Kire, 01) Kevi was a hunter and a trapper and he left meats for the mother and daughter hanged in their hut door. Soon Visenuo understood why Kevi was visiting them and help them during the harvest. However when Atuonuo rejects him, we saw the other side of Kevi that he is revealed as were-tiger or ‘tekhumevi’. After rejecting him, Atuonuo went to the filed in order to reconcile with him. They spend the night together in the hut and then Atuonuo finds out about Kevi, “we have to get away from here, Azuo. We have to get away from him! What are you talking about? I’m here now. You are safe. I won’t let anything harm you. Azuo! You don’t understand. We have to get away from Kevi. He is...he is *tekhumevi!*” (Kire, 78).

The folkloric tale becomes contextualized in this narrative, where the central characters lives intertwine with oral tradition and legendary story. Kevi’s presence represents the Naga community’s belief in lycanthropy, “For the Nagas, it was case in which a person could transform into a tiger, but if any injury occurred to a tiger, a person’s physical body was also inflicted with pain or even death. In the society he was regarded as an extraordinary person.” (Shikhu, 16).

When Visenuo asks whether he was a man or a tiger, Pfenuo, a woman who stays in the Village of Seers says,

‘They are both’... ‘They have a foot in both the worlds. So long as they are alive, they belong to both the world of men, and the men that we call their owners grow more powerful and wealthy from this connection. But it is wrong to call them tiger-owners: the tiger and the man, they are one and the same. When the tiger eats, the man eats: we always say that. Some people insist that the man participates when the tiger is out hunting. We also say, when the tiger dies, the man dies. So they are very closely connected; they say the man is the body and the tiger is the soul. Some say they can interchange at will. (Kire, 92-93)

Through this we came to know more about Kevi as a were-tiger and how much power they possessed not just physical but also spiritual powers. The mother and daughter were on the run away from Kevi as he was chasing them. They escaped to the Village of Seers which is another element of Magic Realism Kire used in her novel. It was not an ordinary village and it was not easy to find the location. It was believed the village would open up without any trouble to a virgin, “the Village of Seers can be as far or as near as they want it to be. If you are a visitor they don’t welcome. It becomes the furthest point on earth.” (Kire, 79)

The Village of Seers has a landmark which one could not be mistaken of, a giant wood apple tree. The mother told her daughter that if they find the gigantic tree they would be saved. Visenuo tries to recollect the landmark which would lead them to the

village, “Get to the great wood apple tree, is what everyone had told her. That tree served as the only known landmark for the Village of Seers, a boundary between the natural and the supernatural.” (Kire,83). Soon they found the gigantic wood apple tree and made their way inside the village and took shelter the night as pfenuo hosts them.

The northeastern part of India upholds numerous age old traditions of religious beliefs and spiritual customs, integral to their cultural fabric. The Village of Seers plays an important role as a repository of their cultural beliefs, showcasing the interactions between the natural and supernatural realms. Again in the Village of Seers, both mother and daughter observe supernatural occurrences unfolding during the night, mirroring the Naga people’s conviction in the coexistence of the spiritual and physical realms.

They heard ululating in the distance and, as they waited, a group of warriors appeared waving spears and prancing about in mock battle steps. While one line of warriors jumped forward with spears upheld as if to challenge an invisible foe, the other group went a step forward at the same very moment as if to avoid a spear thrust. It was a macabre dance executed very slowly.

Pfenuo Returned to their Room

‘None of that is real, mind you. Don’t be deceived, and don’t ever run out to watch. It’s hard to save a human life when a spirit spear finds its target. (Kire, 94)

After witnessing all this, mother and the daughter rest for the night. The next day Kevi is seen in the village square, alarm by this they were on the run again, not long after this Kevi attacked Atuonuo in his were-tiger form but he was killed by the woodsman, thus coming to an end of love story of Kevi and Atuonuo. In the novel Kire does not only portrayed the love between Kevi and Atuonuo but also the love between mother and the daughter. They care for each other after her father past away when she was young, likewise, even for Visenuo, Atuonuo is the only one she has as her family member and thus they love each other and care for one another.

In *Don’t Run, My Love*, Kire seamlessly integrates Naga legends and supernatural elements

into the narrative, making them feel like a natural part of everyday life. For instance, Kevi, as were-tiger is taken directly from a Naga legend and throughout the story, Kevi remains mysterious and enigmatic. The character that embodies mythical beings, the line between the real and the mystical blurs. The Nagas ancestors believe in Seers, who does all the rituals for all kind of festivals or even to harvest. The belief system is deeply rooted into their mindset they always seek out the help of Seers whenever they are in trouble. Likewise, Kire deploy this belief system in her novel, when the mother and the daughter came to the Village of Seers to seek help from the Seer to protect them from the were-tiger or Kevi, “you don’t seems to understand the purpose of the Village of Seers. He looked at Visenuo with some irritation. We give life, not death.” (Kire, 96) Kire paints a vivid picture of Naga culture, where beliefs in the supernatural shape people’s actions and perceptions. Through her skillful prose, Naga legends comes alive, breathing life into the narrative and captivating readers with magic and mystery. Kire turns things that are imagined, like mythical creatures and legends, into something real in her story.

Conclusion

In the novel, Magic realism serves as a luminous thread weaving together the tapestry of love and lore. Magic realism breathes life into the narrative, transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary and inviting readers into a world where the supernatural coexists with the mundane. Kire works magic with her storytelling; turning make believe things into real life experiences. By weaving magic into her tales, she brings together pieces of their identity that might feel scattered and disconnected. It’s like she is painting a picture where mythical creatures and legends walk alongside every day, blending fantasy with reality. She employs the enchanting art of storytelling, infusing it with elements of magic realism to resurrect the forgotten traditions and customs of the Naga tribe, for instance, where mythical beings like Kevi seamlessly inhabit the realm of reality. Through its enchanting weave, the

narrative invites us to explore the realm where magic realism dances with reality. In Kire's hands, magic realism becomes a vessel for exploring the complexities of love and lore, resonating with shared experiences of readers across cultures and generations.

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LEVERAGING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: PRACTICES, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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Abstract

The integration of Information and Communication Technology in language teaching has revolutionized pedagogical practices, presenting both opportunities and challenges for educators worldwide. This paper provides a comprehensive exploration of current methodologies, practices, and perspectives surrounding the incorporation of ICT in language pedagogy. Drawing upon a synthesis of existing literature, empirical studies, and expert insights, it aims to offer a holistic understanding of the dynamic interplay between ICT and language education. The paper elucidates the theoretical frameworks underpinning ICT integration in language teaching, emphasizing its potential to facilitate interactive, learner-centered approaches that enhance language acquisition and proficiency also the diverse array of ICT tools and resources available for language educators, including multimedia platforms, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software, social networking sites, and virtual learning environments. It examines Pedagogical strategies and instructional methodologies associated with ICT integration, such as blended learning models, flipped classroom approaches, and task-based learning paradigms and explores how ICT can foster digital literacy skills, critical thinking, and intercultural competence among language learners, thereby preparing them for participation in a globalized, technologically-mediated society along with emerging trends and future directions in the field, such as the increasing prevalence of mobile learning technologies, gamification, adaptive learning systems, and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in language instruction. It reflects on the potential implications of these developments for language educators, learners, and educational policymakers. It evaluates the challenges and barriers confronting the effective integration of ICT in language teaching, including issues related to access, equity, teacher training, and technological infrastructure. It discusses strategies for the same.

Keywords: *ICT, language teaching, blended learning, digital literacy, pedagogical strategies*

Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of education, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed traditional pedagogical practices across various disciplines, including language teaching. With the rapid advancement of digital technologies, language educators are increasingly exploring innovative ways to leverage ICT tools and resources to enhance language learning outcomes and foster students' communicative competence in diverse linguistic contexts.

The integration of ICT in language teaching is grounded in theoretical frameworks that emphasize the transformative potential of technology to facilitate interactive, learner-centered approaches.

Drawing upon constructivist and socio-cultural perspectives, educators recognize ICT as a catalyst for promoting active engagement, collaboration, and authentic language use among learners. By leveraging multimedia platforms, digital resources, and online communication tools, language educators can create dynamic learning environments that cater to diverse learning styles and foster the development of language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The proliferation of ICT tools and resources for language teaching encompasses a wide array of applications, ranging from computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software to social networking sites and virtual learning environments. These technological innovations offer opportunities for personalized

learning experiences, real-time feedback, and authentic cultural immersion, thereby enriching the language learning journey for students. Moreover, ICT-enabled language instruction transcends the boundaries of traditional classroom settings, enabling learners to access linguistic resources and interact with speakers of the target language across geographical and cultural divides.

However, despite the potential benefits of ICT integration in language teaching, educators encounter various challenges and barriers in its implementation. Issues related to digital divide, limited technological infrastructure, and disparities in access to ICT resources pose significant obstacles to equitable language education initiatives. Moreover, the effective integration of ICT requires on-going professional development and support to enhance teachers' digital literacy skills and pedagogical competencies.

Looking ahead, emerging trends such as mobile learning technologies, gamification, adaptive learning systems, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) hold promise for enhancing language learning experiences and optimizing educational outcomes. By embracing these developments and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, language educators can harness the full potential of ICT to empower learners and prepare them for success in an increasingly interconnected and technologically-mediated world.

Methodology

This paper employs a comprehensive methodology to investigate the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language teaching, encompassing a multi-faceted approach that incorporates literature review, empirical analysis, and expert insights. The methodology outlined below delineates the key steps undertaken to gather, analyze, and synthesize relevant data and information:

Literature Review

A systematic review of existing literature is conducted to identify scholarly articles, research

papers, books, and reports related to ICT-enabled language teaching.

Databases such as PubMed, ERIC, Google Scholar, and academic journals specializing in language education, educational technology, and applied linguistics are searched using relevant keywords and search strings.

The literature review aims to explore theoretical frameworks, pedagogical approaches, best practices, challenges, and emerging trends in ICT integration in language teaching.

Empirical Analysis

Empirical studies and research findings on ICT-enabled language teaching are analyzed to examine the effectiveness of various ICT tools, methodologies, and instructional strategies in language learning contexts.

Quantitative data such as surveys, experimental studies, and quantitative assessments of language learning outcomes are reviewed to identify patterns, trends, and correlations.

Qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and case studies are analyzed to gain insights into learners' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards ICT-enhanced language instruction.

Expert Insights

Interviews, surveys, or expert panels are conducted with language educators, instructional designers, educational technologists, and policymakers to gather expert insights and perspectives on ICT integration in language teaching.

Experts are selected based on their expertise, experience, and involvement in the field of language education and educational technology.

Expert insights provide valuable qualitative data on effective practices, challenges, and future directions in ICT-enabled language teaching.

Synthesis and Analysis

Data gathered from the literature review, empirical analysis, and expert insights are synthesized and analyzed to identify common themes, patterns, and discrepancies.

Key findings, trends, and emerging issues in ICT-enabled language teaching are synthesized into coherent narratives, supported by evidence from the literature and empirical studies.

The synthesis and analysis process involve critical reflection, interpretation, and integration of diverse perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the synthesis of findings, implications for practice, policy, and future research in ICT-enabled language teaching are discussed.

Recommendations are provided for language educators, educational institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders to optimize the integration of ICT in language teaching and learning.

Areas for further research and exploration are identified to address gaps in knowledge and advance the field of ICT-enabled language education.

Overall, this methodology enables a rigorous and systematic investigation of ICT-enabled language teaching, drawing upon a diverse range of sources and methodologies to provide a comprehensive analysis of theoretical frameworks, pedagogical practices, challenges, and future directions in the field. By integrating insights from the literature, empirical studies, and expert perspectives, this paper aims to offer valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing language learning outcomes through the effective use of ICT.

Argument

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language teaching represents a pivotal advancement in education, offering transformative opportunities to enhance language learning outcomes and prepare students for success in a globalized, technologically-mediated society. This argument asserts that the judicious integration of ICT in language pedagogy holds immense potential to enrich teaching practices, engage learners, and foster communicative competence in diverse linguistic contexts.

First and foremost, ICT enables language educators to adopt innovative, learner-centered pedagogical approaches that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of students. By leveraging multimedia resources, interactive software, and online platforms, educators can create dynamic learning environments that facilitate active engagement, collaboration, and authentic language use. For instance, digital storytelling tools allow students to create and share narratives in the target language, fostering creativity, language production, and cultural expression. Similarly, telecollaborative projects enable students to connect with peers from different cultural backgrounds, promoting intercultural communication skills and global citizenship.

Moreover, ICT integration enhances language learning by providing access to authentic linguistic input and cultural content from around the world. Online resources such as digital libraries, podcasts, and streaming platforms offer a wealth of authentic materials for language learners to explore, ranging from literature and films to news articles and social media posts. Through guided exploration and interaction with authentic texts, learners can develop their language skills in context and gain insights into the cultural nuances of the target language.

Discussion

In discussing the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language teaching, it's essential to delve deeper into its implications, challenges, and potential solutions. This discussion section further explores key points raised in the argument and conclusion, providing a nuanced understanding of the complexities and opportunities inherent in ICT-enabled language education.

Enhancing Pedagogical Practices

ICT offers a plethora of tools and resources that can revolutionize traditional pedagogical approaches. However, it's crucial to strike a balance between technology integration and pedagogical efficacy. Educators must critically evaluate the suitability of

ICT tools for achieving specific learning objectives and ensure that technology enhances rather than detracts from the learning experience. Moreover, training and professional development programs are essential to equip educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively integrate ICT into their teaching practices.

Addressing Equity and Access

The digital divide remains a significant challenge in ICT-enabled language education. While technology has the potential to democratize access to education, disparities in access to ICT resources persist, particularly among underserved communities. Bridging the digital divide requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders to provide equitable access to technology infrastructure, devices, and internet connectivity. Additionally, initiatives such as community-based technology centers and mobile learning initiatives can help extend access to marginalized populations.

Promoting Learner Autonomy and Engagement

ICT can empower learners to take control of their learning and engage in meaningful, self-directed language practice. However, it's essential to design ICT-enabled activities that promote active engagement, collaboration, and authentic language use. Gamification, project-based learning, and social networking platforms offer opportunities for learners to interact with peers, receive feedback, and develop language skills in context. By fostering a culture of inquiry, exploration, and reflection, educators can cultivate learners' autonomy and motivation to engage with language learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Embracing Emerging Technologies

As technology continues to evolve, language educators must remain agile and open to embracing emerging technologies that have the potential to enhance learning experiences. Mobile learning technologies, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence hold promise for providing immersive, personalized

learning experiences that cater to individual learners' needs and preferences. However, careful consideration must be given to ethical considerations, data privacy, and the potential unintended consequences of technology use in language education.

Cultivating Intercultural Competence

ICT can serve as a bridge for connecting learners with speakers of the target language from diverse cultural backgrounds. Tele-collaboration projects, online exchange programs, and digital cultural exchanges enable learners to interact with peers from around the world, fostering intercultural understanding and empathy. Moreover, the integration of authentic cultural content into language learning materials can deepen learners' appreciation for the cultural dimensions of language and enhance their ability to navigate cross-cultural communication in diverse contexts.

In conclusion, the discussion highlights the multifaceted nature of ICT-enabled language education, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful integration, equity, learner engagement, technological innovation, and intercultural competence. By addressing these considerations, educators can harness the transformative power of ICT to create inclusive, dynamic learning environments that empower learners to become proficient, confident, and culturally competent communicators in the target language.

Conclusion

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language teaching holds immense promise for revolutionizing pedagogical practices, enriching learning experiences, and fostering communicative competence in diverse linguistic contexts. Throughout this discussion, we have explored the theoretical foundations, pedagogical implications, challenges, and future directions of ICT-enabled language education. From interactive multimedia resources to adaptive learning systems, ICT offers a vast array of tools and technologies that empower educators to create

dynamic, learner-centered environments conducive to language acquisition and cultural immersion. By leveraging digital resources and online platforms, educators can provide students with access to authentic linguistic input, cultural content, and collaborative learning opportunities that transcend the boundaries of traditional classroom settings. Moreover, ICT enables personalized and differentiated instruction, catering to individual students' needs, interests, and proficiency levels. Through adaptive learning algorithms and intelligent tutoring systems, educators can provide timely feedback, remediation, and support tailored to students' unique learning trajectories, thereby optimizing learning outcomes and promoting learner autonomy and self-regulation. However, the effective integration of ICT in language teaching is not without its challenges. Issues such as the digital divide, limited technological infrastructure, and disparities in access to ICT resources pose significant obstacles to equitable language education initiatives. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from educators, policymakers, and stake holders to ensure that all learners have access to the tools and resources they need to succeed in a digital age. Looking ahead, the field of ICT-enabled language teaching is poised for further innovation and evolution. Emerging trends such as mobile learning technologies, gamification, and the integration of artificial intelligence offer exciting opportunities to enhance language learning experiences and optimize educational outcomes. By embracing these developments and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, educators can harness the full potential of ICT to empower learners and prepare them for success in an

increasingly interconnected and technologically-mediated world. In summary, the integration of ICT in language teaching represents a transformative force in education, offering innovative opportunities to enhance language learning outcomes, promote intercultural understanding, and equip students with the skills they need to thrive in a globalized, digital society. By leveraging the power of technology to create dynamic, engaging learning experiences, educators can inspire students to become proficient, confident, and culturally competent communicators in the target language, thus paving the way for a more inclusive, interconnected, and technologically-mediated future.

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SENSE AND SENSIBILITY OF CULTURAL EXPOSURE: IDENTIFYING MULTICULTURAL INCLUSIVITY IN SELECT POEMS OF CHARLES TOMLINSON

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Abstract

Charles Tomlinson was a British poet who explored the notion of perception using different themes in his poems during his career between 1951 and 2006. He is widely described as a cosmopolitan poet due to the multicultural exposure he presents in his poems. There are descriptions of cultural sites ranging from the shrines in Japan to the plazas in Mexico. This multicultural inclusivity must also be seen from the specific historical context of Tomlinson– the Cold War era. Tomlinson’s travels across continents and his emphasis on the theme of perception are decisive factors in this multicultural inclusivity. It can be said that Tomlinson introduced postcolonial elements in his poetry as he challenged extreme ideologies, such as nationalist sentiments entrenched in discrimination and division. Also, Tomlinson believed in creating openings rather than boundaries, which justifies the multicultural inclusivity in his poems. Even though Tomlinson was accused of being an “Americanized” poet in a highly polarised and volatile period, the cultural inclusivity he presents in his poems indicates his rebellion against segregation during that period (Reeves 57). This paper attempts to analyse the process of cultural inclusivity in select poems of Tomlinson based on Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of “cultural difference” (Bhabha 155). Cultural difference is identified by negating the “unitary nature” of culture (Bhabha 156). The thrust here is on how to see cultural inclusivity in Tomlinson’s poetry as different from the imperialist views on culture.

Keywords: *charles tomlinson, cultural inclusivity, homi k bhabha, cultural difference*

Introduction

Cultural inclusivity in a contemporaneous sense involves institutionalised and formal settings, where welcoming and attempting to understand diverse cultures mostly becomes a matter of policy decision. The sociological aspect of acknowledging cultural distinction is not associated with only formal settings. The question here is how far the enunciation of cultural differences from being authoritarian, especially when traditional aspects of culture are interpreted. Tomlinson refrains from assuming a colonial or Eurocentric mindset as he observes cultures outside his country and region. When observed from a chronological perspective, exploration of varying cultures through travel and exchanges. Charles Tomlinson’s poems being based on the theme of perception, examine the question of cultural differences as well. As the poet was part of a highly polarised era, instigated by the World Wars, he condemned several extreme ideologies.

Embracing Cultural Variegation

In his poems addressing multiple cultures spanning across different continents, Tomlinson suggests the need for learning about and respecting other cultures. The emphasis here is on the need to observe the distinctiveness of cultures across the globe, and to appreciate them, thus leading to cultural inclusivity. This cultural stance is reminiscent of the concept of “*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*” (*Maha Upanishad*, VI, verses 71-73). The policy of cultural inclusivity is often stated in formal contexts, such as educational and workplace environments and social contexts. Such developments found their way into the formal jargon only by the end of the twentieth century. It is remarkable that Charles Tomlinson, as a poet, introduced the ethicality of respecting cultural differences, through his poetry using the theme of perception. Several poems of Tomlinson explore the cultural contexts of the Americas, Asia, Africa and parts of Europe. Tomlinson also addresses the

cultural scenario of different parts of his country without fail.

Aesthetically responding to the divisive nature of the war-torn world was the primary objective of Tomlinson's poems. Tomlinson challenged the polarisation and opened up to the process of being united beyond borders, as evidenced by his friendship with Octavio Paz. This breaching of borders, borders mostly propped up by extreme nationalism, was achieved through travels and transatlantic friendships. There are several poems based on Tomlinson's travel to the American continents and he emphasises the complex cultural variegation of the places he visited. One such visit leads to the recounting of a Ute lore in his poem, "Ute Mountain", where he speaks on how a legendary Ute chief, upon the end of his life, chose to rest as the mountain. The notable part of this poem is that Tomlinson does not give a whitewashed commentary on the cultural divergence in the Ute lore. Tomlinson's intention here is to acknowledge the "cultural positionality" by accommodating the myth into the frame of tradition and cultural texts (Bhabha). The poem assumes the pattern of an oral text as Tomlinson narrates the myth tersely,

'If you need me, call me.'

His singularity dominates the plain
as we call to our aids his image:
thus men make a mountain (137).

Here, Tomlinson describes how the chief made a promise to his people that he would be there when they were in need. This is inevitably linked to the shape of the mountain, which resembles a man in a resting position. The conclusion of the poem is that humans make lore out of something as natural as a mountain, which is suggested as a universal phenomenon.

The Cultural Distinction of the East and the Assemblage of Symbols

Following one of his visits to the rural side of Japan, Tomlinson pens some poems resembling a travel diary. By transcribing the sights he encounters in Japan, Tomlinson also seeks to create a metaphoric layer to the meanings he tries to convey in his

poems. In "Epilogue", Tomlinson describes how "The lobster stands for longevity" in the Japanese tradition, while in many other cultures, immortality and longevity are symbolised chiefly by fishes or turtles (38). The diversified use of symbols is mentioned in the poem using this metaphor of lobster. In this poem, Tomlinson foregrounds the concept of cultural inclusivity by demarcating the differences between European symbolism and Japanese symbolism. Widely termed as a cultural shock, the process of getting acquainted with the vignettes of other cultures, heavily contrastive to the visitor's culture, is analysed in this poem. Bhabha elucidates, "... cultural difference is the process of the enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable,' authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification" (Bhabha). Cultural shock can be identified as a mildly aggressive term as it problematises the process of encountering a new cultural background. In his poems based on cultural diversity, Tomlinson ensures that encounters with alien cultures are not given the appearance of a cultural shock. The author focuses on the significance of an open mind here.

As Tomlinson explores the geographical setting and the common sights in Japan in the initial part of the poem, he also states how,

the tree-fern, bamboo,
banana and palm grow here
side by side
with pine, oak, beech and conifer (38-39).

These lines are suggestive of the parallel he tries to draw between his native place and Japan. Intertextuality is also brought in, as the author describes how Marco Polo described Japan as Zipangu "in bad French/ to a fellow Pisan prisoner" (39). Here, Tomlinson uses the linguistic symbolism of the word "Zipangu", in connection with how an outsider perceives the location based on the narratives he has heard. Tomlinson emphasises that Marco Polo never really visited Japan and his idea of Japan was as a place named Zipangu, the land of gold; historians recount how this account of Marco Polo led to a voyage led by Columbus to Japan

(Masakatsu). This significantly points to the fact that people view alien culture based on the information that is available to them rather than direct sensory experience. There is also a reference to how “all history before 500/must be classed as legendary” (39). This shows the distinct historiography of Japanese culture.

Means of Locating Cultural Variegation at Sites of Cultural Memory

While narrating cultural variation and exhorting cultural inclusivity through narratives that emphasise the distinctive nature of each culture, Tomlinson finds markers of such cultural distinctiveness. In his poem “Pastoral”, Tomlinson discusses the shepherding in rural Greece. By discussing the herd and the shepherd that he leads downhill, Tomlinson tried to transpose the image of the Greek god Pan,

and through the sloping paddock,
in file they follow the man
in shirt, jeans, slouch hat,
unpied piper, reincarnate Pan (29).

The author also borrows the common fairy tale of the Unpied Piper of Hamelin, which originated in Saxony, which is part of modern Germany (Britannica). But the prominent reference is to the goat-headed god, Pan, who used to play flute. The sight of the shepherd leading the goats to graze reminds the poet of the sloppy appearance of Pan. Tomlinson is reminded of the ferality of Pan as he witnesses the shepherd. Pan was no god of glory and Tomlinson tries to emphasise this element of commonality.

Another instance of locating such markers would be Tomlinson observing the coins tossed into a fountain for good fortune (17). The setting of the poem is Greece, where luck or fortune is always associated with divine interference. Greek mythology is resplendent with gods that have their own hand in determining the destiny of humans, demigods and fellow divinities. Even though a divine presence that helps humans across existence through blessings is a universal archetype, Greek mythology directly personifies the element of luck. The perpetuation of this belief in the set of myths and the

intergenerational transmission of such beliefs is observed by Tomlinson here. As Tomlinson re-imagines the children throwing coins into the fountain for luck, he does not diminish that myth as a superstition or dismiss the cultural value of this specific belief system. As the poem concludes, Tomlinson hopes the myth would give a sense of hope to the naive children.

Cultural Dispossession and the Empathy in Cultural Inclusivity

Among the cultural variations, he also notes the elements of cultural dispossession. Such an instance of cultural dispossession is caricatured in the poem, “Teotihuacan”, where Tomlinson describes a young female descendant of the “ancient Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacan” (Britannica, 2024). During one of his trips across the Mexican heartland, Tomlinson encounters a young girl selling the statuette of Mexican gods. There is a clear depiction of how the cultural dispossession has made the natives realise, “Now the gods are dead” (Tomlinson 61). The girl vouches for the authenticity of the idols she is selling and she is forced to commercialise her culture for her daily bread. Here, Tomlinson inspects the aftermath of colonisation from a cultural point of view as he illustrates the fate of the native Mexican culture following the cultural invasion from Europe.

The poem opens describing the auralty of the street where the natives are selling the *idolitos* of their gods, “will you buy? will you buy?/ It is the gods they are selling” (61). Evidently, the stark contrast based on the dichotomy of the physical and the metaphysical are introduced using the metaphor of a girl selling the idols of her ‘gods’. While emphasising the disadvantageous situation of the third world inhabitants, Tomlinson also delineates the cultural dislocation these natives undergo owing to the economic drain perpetrated by colonialism. By making an incisive comment on how people have to sell their ‘gods’ to survive, Tomlinson analyses the atrocities committed upon the colonised minds of Mexico. Teotihuacans are left with no other choice, but to sell the crumbling remains of their cultural heritage so they could survive. The narration changes

to how each seller is “vouching for the authenticity/ of his own particular god” (61). There is also a suggestion that priesthood has been transferred to the vendors, as there are no more ritualistic settings where the traditional Teotihuacan priests vouch for the magnificence of the deities they worship.

Towards the end of the poem, the searing sensation of cultural dispossession and the resultant despair is introduced through the line, “Now the gods are dead”. Tomlinson walks the readers through the process of discovering the tragedy faced by the natives, who are forced to believe their cultural connotations are mere lore and nothing more. This highlights the disintegration of a culture rich in myths and traditions, being reduced to artefacts on the streets to be sold. Cultural appropriation becomes normality for the underprivileged natives, who were looted in all ways. Their soil and spirit have been completely robbed,

The linguistic difference that informs any cultural performance is dramatized in the common semiotic account of the disjuncture between the subject of a proposition (énoncé) and the subject of enunciation, which is not represented in the statement but which is the acknowledgement of its discursive embeddedness and address, its cultural positionality, its reference to a present time and a specific space (Bhabha). The idol has become an artifice of the past and the ritual has become a farce in the commercialised enunciation of cultural difference.

Conclusion

Tomlinson’s poems exemplify the ambivalent nature of interpreting culture, especially when linguistic elements are involved. This is specifically why the poet does not believe in conclusive statements on culture and leaves enormous space for interpretation, which Bhabha would call “Third Space” in his essay on cultural differences; Bhabha emphasises how “cultural knowledge is continuously revealed as an

integrated, open, expanding code” (2006). Interpreting culture, even when it is native culture, leads to several ambiguities and this has to be kept in mind while observing cultural practices external to one’s own culture. This is where the element of cultural inclusivity enters the poems of Tomlinson. Charles Tomlinson refrains from making narrow statements about culture as he recognises the relative importance of time-space continuum on the interpretation of cultural texts and practices.

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FORGING HOPE FROM ADVERSITY: THE GRITTY ODYSSEY OF AMIR IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S MASTERPIECE

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Abstract

A comprehensive overview of the complex social environment that existed in Afghanistan in the late 1970s is provided by Khaled Hosseini's book *"The Kite Runner."* In the context of a changing Afghan culture marked by a combination of freed elites and the impact of extremist religious leaders, the main character, Amir, travels through three turbulent decades preceding 9/11. Amir's battle with mental pain amid social unrest and his quest for survival and atonement is at the heart of the story. The article illuminates Amir's fortitude and the transforming potential of facing one's sorrow by examining the historical upheavals, ethnic dynamics, and effects of foreign invasions in Afghanistan.

Keywords: defence mechanism, suffering, survival, mental trauma

Introduction

How the past affects the lives of the protagonists is one of *The Kite Runner's* most persistent themes. It serves as a reminder that our actions are not unnoticed or unpunished. Amir is pursued and haunted by a watershed event that occurs in the first half of the novel for the rest of his life, and the remaining story truly hinges on this event from a storyline perspective. Hassan, an ethnic Hazara youngster who practises Shia Islam and whose father works for Amir's father, and Amir, a wealthy Pashtun boy who practises Sunni Islam, are pals. The two boys hang out together and fly kites in Kabul during the day. Another Pashtun boy named Assef is a bully at school who terrorises other boys. Sadist could be the term that could aptly describe Assef. The intervention of Hassan, who is skilled with sling shots and has one pointed at Assef and is threatening to blow out his eye with it, forces Assef to relinquish control of Amir as he is picking on him and has him pinned down. Assef releases Amir but promises retribution. Due to the racist instruction he has received from his friends, parents, and teachers, he detests being assaulted by a Hazara boy to the core.

Amir wins the annual Kite Festival that takes place in Kabul. He wants to show his father, Baba, who frequently disapproves of Amir and encourages him to be more daring, that he is happy of the

achievement and proudly displays the trophy. The last cut kite is the prize, but Amir has no idea how to get it. But Hassan is a pro at grabbing kites and knows how to do it. Hassan sets off to retrieve the kite and, thanks to his expertise, succeeds in doing so. However, on the route, he encounters the thug Assef. In an effort to deny Amir his award, he demands the kite, but Hassan insists. Then Assef takes Hassan and rapes him in front of everyone, eternally humiliating him in that community. Even while he observes from the periphery, Amir does not dare to step in to save his closest friend—the one who is in trouble only because of Amir and his kite. He keeps the incident a secret out off earth at his Baba will become even more angry with him if he learns about it. However, the guilt consumes him, and in an effort to deal with it, he begins to deny it. The living proof that Hassan is, however, prevents him from doing so, and one day he plants some money on Hassan to frame him to be a thief.

Amir's Journey through Struggle

The past doings of *The Kite Runner's* main protagonists and how it haunts their present are absolutely essential to the story's development. The narrative advances with Amir's passive observation of the rape of the minority Hazara youngster Hassan by the majority Pashtunboy Assef.

It is this single act that compels Amir to remember his birth place Afghanistan more than anything else. He always thinks about Hassan and how his life must be. He often remembers Hassan when talking about Afghanistan in his father's company. The uncanny memory of Hassan is what prompts him to consider returning to Afghanistan after the death of his father. Later, he learns that Hassan and his wife were both murdered by the Taliban. He is forced to react to the new circumstance and accept Rahim Khan's offer, which allows him the chance to redeem himself. He returns to Afghanistan as a result of the pivotal incident of Hassan's rape. He feels even more pressured to atone for his shame as a child for leaving Sohrab's father Hassan to be raped by Assef when he learns that Sohrab is now in the hands of the Taliban warrior Assef. *The Kite Runner* is driven by the past's enduring power, which is apparent throughout the narrative.

Amir's character is an ideal representation of a realistic survivor. His ability to adapt to the demands of the situation for survival is a noteworthy quality in his character. He is a prime example of a survivor who need not always be someone who is arrogant, violent, courageous, or animated. In fact, a survivor is typically a complex individual with a mix of positive and negative traits. Amir's unfavourable characteristics, such as cowardice, inadequacy, anguish, selfishness, slyness, meanness, and betrayal, are also crucial to his survival in the various dangerous situations he must face. Like many others, he responds to threats verbally when he is unable to act physically. Amir uses a number of defence mechanisms, but he does not solely rely on them; rather, they offer him time to gather energy and come up with effective coping mechanisms. He quickly learns to employ a variety of effective coping mechanisms to get over the difficulties. When it becomes inevitable, he even views violence as a drastic kind of survival. Thus, Amir's struggle for survival is significantly shaped by violence. He is exposed to a variety of violent acts.

The emotional damage he experiences as a result of his father's rejection shapes his decisions moving

forward. To get his father's praise, he resorts to emotional violence, which he then uses on Hassan, his best friend. The collective violence he witnesses during his escape from Afghanistan teaches him that there are times when it is better to occupy the sidelines rather than to take action. With this knowledge in hand, he is able to manage his survival in the United States. Towards the conclusion of the novel, he is subjected to physical assault by Assef, which frees him from a worry that has been gnawing at him and a feeling of guilt that has long buried him.

Amir's father showed signs of being unhappy with him because he was not as cognitively and physically sound as was expected. Amir was horrified to watch a *chapandaz*, a talented horseman, fall off his saddle and was trampled under a score of hooves on the day of Buzkashi, the Afghan New Year's Day. When his father realized how brittle his son's mind was, he was extremely disturbed. He spoke with Rahim Khan about the situation and conveyed his abject hatred for his kid. Topping off his disgust, he said, "If I hadn't witnessed the doctor take him out of my wife with my own eyes, I'd never believe he's my son" (20). This comment reveals that his father never really welcomed him from the start of his life, which leaves him feeling unsettled in his own mind. His father was his only source of support because his mother passed away while giving birth to him. However, he learned about his father's contempt for him from the chat he had with Rahim Khan, and as a result, he faced several unmet aspirations. He expected fatherly love from Baba, but his frailty prevented that. In his psychoanalytical research, Freud demonstrates how these unmet needs give rise to the unconscious, where they take the shape of id. He believes that the desire for the pleasure principle, which is unconcerned with the reality principle, is caused by the id.

Amir had a nuanced understanding of Hassan. He was an excellent observer of Hassan. Never a detail about him was neglected. He seems exhausted as he continues, "Baba never missed Hassan's birthday. He stopped asking Hassan for suggestions for presents since the latter was usually too bashful

to openly request anything. Thus, each winter, Baba would choose one item especially for himself” (39).

Towards the end of the novel, he found out through his father's buddy that his Baba was Hassan's biological father. But throughout the novel, he unwittingly kept returning to the subject of why his father loved Hassan so much. The author rationalizes Amir's developing id by pointing to his unsolved stigmas. Freud employed a variety of techniques to reveal the patient's mind. We are able to identify a mental technique, referred to as a defence mechanism, that functions to prevent the patient from having to admit traumatic memories that he loathes. The person develops a sense of masochism as a result of this procedure. In order to get even with Hassan for being a Hazara, Assef and his friends decided to molest him.

The cause of Amir's passivity was one of his ids, or polymorphously distorted passions. He was ready to do anything and go to any extent to win his father's love. He lost all sense of reason as a result of receiving parental love. When he gave his father the kite, and in response to his joy, held him close to him, it became clear how much an acceptance from his father meant to him.

Freud claimed that the id, by nature, is extremely powerful and socially unacceptable. Although they are transmitted to the unconscious as repressed desires, they never cease to exist. The person may experience hysteria, psychosis, obsession-compulsion, and other neurotic disorders as a result of the unconscious having to use a great deal of energy to confront these hidden urges. We also observe a similar occurrence in Amir's case. He visited his uncle in Jalalabad with his father, who was quite proud of him for winning the kite competition in front of the family. He was highly regarded by everyone in attendance. But he was unable to find happiness since he would never forget seeing Hassan get sexually assaulted. He was doing everything in his power to confide in someone about his shame so that he wouldn't have to live with this deception anymore. He was unable to sleep that night as these thoughts plagued him. As a result, Amir had

very strong principles of pleasure and reality that were unwilling to yield to anyone. The crash and insomnia that followed as an outcome could have caused neurotic illnesses.

Amir's Resilience

The challenges that trouble Amir's personality are described throughout the novel's plot. There are too many psychological problems for them that need to be resolved over his lifetime. Amir employs defence strategies to resolve these disputes. Denial is the first defence strategy that will be discussed. Denial is the rejection of reality or the fact that something occurs in someone's life. This indicates that a person who engages in denial often conceals how they truly feel.

If Amir's ego is functioning correctly, he will tell Hassan's father the truth about what had happened to Hassan without hesitation. Harmony and adjustment pervades when the ego is using its executive functions properly. Amir knows something awful has occurred to Hassan, but his ego is too big for this scenario, so he denies it. He responds to his refusal by lying to Hassan's father. He thus acts as if nothing has happened as a result of his denial. Denial is a common strategy used by people to avoid confronting uncomfortable emotions. Additionally, they believe that using denial is commonplace for them. In Amir's case, despite being aware of a significant event occurring nearby, he chooses to keep it to himself. Regardless of the fact that the matter is significant or significant, he refrains from speaking the truth. In Amir's instance, he also used words that may be seen as a denial statement.

Displacement is another form of defence strategy in the novel. It refers to how a person's emotions stem from one person but gets directed to others. If one item is unavailable, the cathexis might switch to another that is. As a result, a person who does displacement frequently finds it difficult to communicate their emotions to their objective. “THE NEXT MORNING, as he was preparing my breakfast, Hassan asked if something was bothering me. I snapped at him, told him to mind his own business” (23). Amir gets more sensitive as a result of his discomfort in an unfavourable scenario since

he is unable to tell when someone is being attentive or bothersome. There is a transmission of emotion during displacement. This means that someone who utilizes displacement will not actually express the true emotion they are feeling to the person who is intended to receive it; instead, they'll transform it into a different item. The aforementioned remark highlights the way Amir channels his rage into another thing. People with healthy personality systems typically experience happiness when they are well-cared for or are the centre of attention. He feels uneasy and thinks Hassan simply wants to trouble him because his superego is out of balance, which causes him to feel this way.

Amir's emotions are unstable as a result of the numerous problems in his life. He develops the habit of condemning others without good cause. In his mind, Hassan is to blame for everything that occurs in his life. Therefore, Hassan is frequently haunted by the dislocation that occurs in this book. The quotation that follows will serve as an illustration of how Amir conveys his movement towards another item.

It is evident that Amir truly has a terrible memory when forced to see his friend being raped. Amir and Hassan never again played together after that. On a lovely occasion, they crosspaths where they once frequented. Amir abruptly strikes Hassan there with a pomegranate while abusing Hassan. Because he is unable to assist Hassan when he finds himself in a difficult circumstance, he feels like a coward. He decides to curse Hassan as a way to vent his frustration rather than face the truth that he is a coward. This is an instance of displacement that is utilized in the narrative. Unconscious coping techniques known as defensive mechanisms are used in stressful situations. According to Freud, the ego uses defence mechanisms to keep itself safe. These techniques might lessen tension by unintentionally altering reality. These mechanisms are unlearned actions that frequently take place without the individual consciously choosing to do so.

Conclusion

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir goes through a lot of traumatic situations as a youngster. For instance, he experiences harsh treatment from his Baba, sees his buddy getting raped, and is even accused of killing his mother. He transformed into the person that he is now bearing in mind all these events from his past as he feels envious, worried, and guilty. The tensions that Amir experiences in this novel are a result of the superego's dominance. He therefore employs defence mechanisms to deal with his situation in an attempt to resolve these disputes. *The Kite Runner* demonstrates the presence of an ego defence mechanism that Amir employs to deal with his predicament. Denial is one of his methods of defence. Amir frequently disputes a lot of what he knows and feels. In a number of situations that he encounters, he makes an effort to appear uninformed and unwilling to get further engaged. He could be less ignorant if he does not employ denial. He will become more aware of his surroundings and what goes on around him. But he opts for denial since it allows him to mask his true emotions. He genuinely has a lot of anxiety, but his denial acts as a coping method to lessen that sensation. Displacement is another strategy that Amir employs to defend himself. This characteristic shows how an emotion that was once directed towards one person or thing is now directed at another person or thing. When a person is unable to convey a sentiment directly, displacement is frequently utilised. The novel demonstrates how Amir chooses to communicate his emotions through other ways and means since he is unable to do so directly to the true object he should be expressing for.

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KAATHAL- THE CORE : A QUEER READING THROUGH THE LENS OF MALAYALAM SENSIBILITY

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Abstract

Kaathal- The Core has been hailed as an epoch-making movie in the history of South Indian cinema with its phenomenal casting, daring subject and realistic portrayal of so-called deviant and abnormal life. Malayalam movies has always been open and welcoming to novel ideas and depiction of subculture in the reel. The Malayalam audience are unique with their reception of novel and empowering thoughts and their unapologetic rejection of empowerment at the cost of their core conservative beliefs. The director of the movie has effortlessly amalgamated the topic with relevance to the sensibility of the Malayalam audience. The present paper puts forth the contradictions the film emulates because of its endeavor to integrate and customize the topic of homosexuality in accordance with the Keralite audience. The paper also highlights the pitfalls that the film displays towards its subject. An attempt is made to unfurl and highlight the positive portrayal of the gay issue, the first of its kind in Malayalam cinema.. Deconstruction and queer analysis has been adopted as the primary methodological tool of analysis to close read the text.

Keywords: *homosexuality, queer theory, section 377*

Queer theory evolved during the late twentieth century with its strong contention of deconstructing fixed identities and its critique of domesticity of gay and lesbian inclinations. The term queer was negative in its origin and the queer movement deliberately chose it to emphasize its stand against all kinds of normativity within LGBTQIA community which necessarily breed further hierarchy and discrimination. Queer theory seeks to destabilize all norms of anchoring towards inclusivity and domesticity which further amplifies the matter inequality and exclusion.

After long years of subjecting the audience to homophobia, Malayalam movies have shown a significant shift towards a more inclusive story telling especially in the realm of LGBTQIA+ movies. Eventhough malayalam movies have always open to novel ideas and depiction of subculture it has often been fraught with stereotypes, discrimination and marginalization. In the recent years the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ characters in malayalam movies have been steadily increasing. This significant change can

be due to the changing societal attitudes and increased awareness about lgbtq rights.

Kaathal – The Core has been hailed as an epoch-making movie in the history of South Indian Cinema with its phenomenal casting, daring subject and realistic portrayal of so called deviant and abnormal life. The movie is directed by Jeo Baby who is known for his thought provoking and progressive films like *The Great Indian Kitchen* and *2 penkuttikal*. The film revolves around Mathew Devassy, a closeted homosexual man played by Mammooty. The movie is a gentle portrayal of the dysfunctional couple Mathew and his wife Omana who files a divorce. Omana's pertinent reason for divorce is the denial of physical needs because of Mathew's sexual orientation. It also highlights the turmoils faced by the couple, their daughter and their near ones. Through Mathew's story *Kaathal* offers insight into the struggle faced by homosexual individuals in navigating human relationships and societal norms. The story starts with Omana, the character played by Jyothika at a church in Kerala's Teekoy village. The

camera shot moving from Jesus to Omana indicates an imagery of how both have been carrying a cross for many years. Omana is portrayed as a good Christian but at the same time she is also a modern woman who has a mind of her own. She is unfazed by the coercions of her family and society. She “stays back for two decades with Mathew to finally break out so that she can free not only herself, but also her husband, from the turbulence of his double life”. Even though the present-day Omana is a strong woman, her tolerance to endure a challenging marriage citing her reason as love and respect for her father-in-law might be baffling for the audience. Her character is depicted with sensitivity and her journey towards self emancipation is a powerful statement in a society where women’s agency is often limited. The decision of Omana to spend 20 years with her gay husband might perplex the audience, but the filmmaker attribute the reason for her silence to criminalization of homosexuality until 2018. If Omana had filed a case before 2018 Mathew would have been considered as engaging in a criminal offence as per the existing law. Here the director indirectly mentions the repeal of section 377 and how it helped so many closeted queer persons to come out. Section 377 stated that “whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal is a punishable offence”.

Mathew Devassy is a highly respected man from a privileged background. He is set to contest in the local body election as a candidate of an obviously left party. When Omana files for divorce alleging cruelty in marriage, he is shaken. When the rumours began to spread about his divorce and his identity, he is shielded from direct insults and slurs. Mathew is still able to contest for election whereas Thankan, his alleged lover, a driving instructor from a less privileged background cannot escape from the slurs thrown at him.

The courtroom scenes in *Kaathal* sheds light onto many realities face by homosexual individuals. There is a scene where Mathew’s lawyer talks about how he is a well-loved and respectable man and whether he has ever behaved violently to which the opposition brings up the absurdity in the question and ask “can’t a socially respectable man be like

this? Should one belong in a particular category to be in a homosexual affair?” (1:06:41). This insinuates how the society at large still believes that homosexuality is an immoral practice. The movie also sheds light on the fact that “more than 80% of homosexuals in our country is married to straight partners”(1:12:55). The heteronormativity in our culture creates an environment where homosexual people are tied up in a heterosexual marriage in order to maintain a social facade. Mathew’s father also admits that he coerced Mathew to get married after knowing his sexual identity. It is even more horrifying to know that Mathew’s father forced him to get married convincing him that everything will be alright if he gets married. So many educated parents think that being gay is a mental illness. “They fail to understand that homosexuality is an inborn tendency and a person has no control over it”.

Homosexuality is stigmatized in contemporary sociocultural gestalt of Indian society because of the way it clashes with the dominant cultural norms. Homosexuals are considered to have “damaged identities” in a society where heterosexuality is considered to be the norm. *The Order of Discourse* by Foucault gives an analysis of the politics of exclusion. “People who identify themselves as homosexuals do not have the structural assistance heterosexuals have” (355). They are always in a struggle with the entire system. He argues that power operates through discourses and these discourses regulate and exclude certain identities from the dominant social order. Mathew and Thankan goes through a horror of coming out as a homosexual in a conservative environment.

The movie perfectly portrays the agony and affection of homosexual persons without showing intimate scenes between them. The beauty of the movie lies in the subtle romance and between Mathew and Thankan. He played “the role of a man who had to suppress his love beautifully”. There was also love and respect in the relationship between Omana and Mathew. Both of them helped each other out of their predicaments in a dignified way. It is unanimously observed that mainstream movies and television series do not represent the lives of gay men in a manner that is realistic: it is nearly always

demeaning, flippant and sensitively handled. A large section of the society believes in pseudoscience and misinformation about the queer community. A lot of gay movies are known for their explicit sex scenes. *Kaathal- The Core* have succeeded in focusing more on character development and storytelling.

The movie offers a heightened level of approval for the homosexual motif within the Malayalam viewership, while also tailoring the discussion of concealed same-sex orientation by incorporating a traditional and domesticated form of homosexuality centered around monogamy in order to provoke recognition and approval from the Malayalam audience. An illustration of an implicit subtlety in the portrayal of homosexuality in the Keralite setting is exemplified by the portrayal of the primary homosexual character Mathew. He is depicted as a closeted gay individual who engages in a singular relationship with a male companion. Moreover, he is portrayed as a morally upright individual within society, displaying empathy towards his wife's struggles and distress towards the conclusion of the narrative. The depiction of closeted homosexuality in the Indian context, as shown in the film *Kaathal-The Core* significantly diverges from reality. The actual scenario involves the presence of individuals who identify as gay in India, engaging in relationships as Men who have Sex with Men (MSMs). These relationships often involve discreet polygamous arrangements, such as interactions with male sex workers and participation in transient open relationships. Surprisingly, the movie fails to acknowledge the MSM status of either Mathews or Thankan, who is Mathew's partner.

The examination of the nuanced relationship between Mathew and Thankan exemplifies a form of discrimination where their homosexuality, along with the subsequent shame and repercussions in their lives, is administered with varying degrees of severity towards each individual. While Thankan faces severe and unjustifiable verbal abuse and critique, Mathew manages to uphold a certain level of dignity in comparison to Thankan. Consequently, the depiction of homosexuality in the film adheres to stereotypical representations, aiming to resonate with

the mindset of a predominantly heterosexual, patriarchal, and hierarchical Indian society. The depiction of Omana also highlights the inconsistency in representing a progressive matter by shaping Omana as a patient, reserved, and composed individual who implausibly waits for years to address the topic of homosexuality, solely to shield her insensitive husband from being charged with a legal violation. Omana, who quietly endures for the sake of her family and child, does not correspond with the sensibilities of contemporary women in today's era. The lack of intimate scenes may testify the fact that the film aims to cater to the wide family audience in Malayalam industry.

Nevertheless, *Kaathal- The Core* remains a landmark and a stepping stone in the history of Malayalam industry as a movie that made a bold and a positive treatment of the gayness in the Indian context. Despite its pitfalls in its transparent treatment of the subject, it surely paves way to more objective and honest portrayal in the posterity. *Kaathal* with its pros and cons turns out to be surely an asset to the LGBTQIA+ community with its genuine attempt of the realistic representation of the dark side of hidden homosociality and compulsory homosexuality existing in Indian society. The film also lay bare the pathetic situation of women caught in arranged marriages in the Indian society where veiled homosexuality unleashes in abundance.

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ECHOES OF SILENCE: EXPLORING VOICELESSNESS AND ISOLATION AS THE AFTERMATHS OF TRAUMA IN LAYLA ALAMMAR'S *SILENCE IS A SENSE*

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Abstract

*Speech has historically been regarded as a divine gift that sets human apart from other beings. It is an approved medium of culture and authority. The advantages of listening and remaining silent are the rhetorical arts that are essential to our ability to communicate effectively. When this tendency of expression is lost due to an intense trauma, the victim become silenced. The person takes a resolution to remain silent for the rest of his or her life to avoid further impending dangers. The victims remain silent about the most traumatic episode that took place in their lives. The novel *Silence is a Sense* delves into the life of one such character who has become mute for a lifetime, due to her past Syrian war trauma. The ongoing Syrian war has costed the lives of million civilians through mass-killings, major bomb blasts, chemical attacks, execution and so on. The character on undergoing these attacks and has survived the traumas uses her silence as a means of Self-protection and preservation of identity in an alien land. This paper attempts to bring to light the journey of this traumatized character through her effective use of silence as resistance to oppressive institutions and cultural expectations as a refugee in UK.*

Keywords: *trauma, voluntary silence, silence as agency, breaking silence*

Introduction

Trauma is tough to describe through words. The traumatized person's incapacity to merge with the outside world makes them ideal targets for many forms of oppression. Such events lower one's self esteem, leading to voicelessness. Trauma, therefore, is defined as an intrusive experience that has the potential to disrupt a person's emotional stability as well as his or her perception of the world. Trauma studies investigates trauma's impact on literature and society by examining its psychological, rhetorical, and cultural implications. It examines the complex psychological and social aspects that influence one's understanding of a traumatic experience, as well as how such an experience shapes the life of a person. Literature as a prism of life. It reflects life and pictures history through many ways. In terms of

historical documentations, the victims, the survivors, and many sympathizers give a firsthand recording of these events through Literary writings. They are also known as witnesses. Therefore, the author who bear witness to a gruesome history is known as "an intellectual witness" (Hartman 8). Layla Alammar, the author of the novel is the intellectual witness. She is at present pursuing her doctorate at the University of Edinburgh. She has gained the information about the Syrian atrocities from a firsthand witness Faraj Alnasser, a young man from Aleppo. The refugee character Rana is just like the witness who gave voice to her whole Syrian community through her magazine writings titled "The Voiceless".

Trauma and Silence

Silence is a purposeful communication tactic. The Holocaust transformed the meaning of silence

since survivors were unable to voice their experiences in death camps. This consequently led the victims to quietness associated with exile, destruction, and loss of identity. Silence is an effective weapon for fiction writers. Emotion is heightened by silencing a character in a sensitive moment; breaking an action with silence can increase the drama; and allowing a character to be silent provides reflection and empathy. Writers like Jane Austen, Kazuo Ishiguro, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande and many others have used silence to develop character and mood rather than just plot and action. Rana's terrible experiences in civil war and as a refugee has prevented her from rebuilding and transformation. For a trauma survivor like her there is a "constitutive failure of linguistic representation" (Erll 80) of her own experiences. As a result, Rana who was once a happy and sociable person undergoes a personal "crisis of representation" (Caruth 2) and thereby chooses silence for the rest of her life.

Throughout the novel Silence has an elevated significance. Rana affirms to Cathy Caruth's "unspeakability of trauma" (Caruth 2). Traumatic experiences like those she had undergone are difficult to articulate due to their incomprehensible nature and perceived threat. "When one is physically vulnerable, fearing further violence or death, this forced silence necessarily shapes subsequent reaction to the trauma. It constitutes a secondary trauma of enormous importance." (Lister 4). Rana in the novel has a medical record of "hysterical mutism characterized by what this clinician has determined is an obstinate and voluntary silence" (Alammar 69). The character therefore forces herself to be silent, due to her trauma and turns an observant eye towards the outside world. She is a woman who has undergone the war atrocities and consequently became immune to them. By choosing silence she tries to discard threats in her new safe home in an English city. She says.

It is bombs and gunfire and babies crying in trees and mothers wailing and fathers shouting and rushing rivers and howling winds and crunching

tyres and andand. It is the furthest possible thing from silence. And it seemed to me that the only way to counter this cacophony was to go quiet, to express nothing. The only reasonable response was to fill myself up with silence. (Alammar 149)

Silence, for Rana is peace, safety, and a symbol of serenity in her life. She tries to linger in that solace without a tiny disturbance from fellow humans. She isolates herself from the outside world for better attainment of freedom.

Silence as an Agency for Voiceless Women

In feminist criticism and literary scholarship, silence is seen as a symbol of weakness. "Throughout western social history, all people gendered feminine (or weaker) have been systematically muted if not silenced. Silence has been the ornament of the female sex." (Glenn 10). Rana, in the novel is not silenced by an outside force, instead she chooses to practice silence through her willingness. Robyn Fivush distinguishes between being silenced and being silent. His opinion denotes being silenced as the lack of power to voice out and being silent rejects the authoritative narrative of voice.

The character Rana considers silence as an agency towards the oppressive people in her English community, who look down on her and treats her as an outcast due to her muteness. She is not deterred by those treatments and considerations as she wears her disability as an ornament of pride. She is often called as the strange one by the society of people around her. Whenever she is stressed due to an external's intrusion, she tries to shut down her mind by becoming silent. This happens on a particular occasion when the editor Josie tries to put on more pressure on her to extract truths about her past. "Shutting the laptop with a loud *thwack*, I return to my unmade bed and bury myself beneath the thick duvet. Maybe I'm done with Josie. Maybe I'm done with all of them. Maybe it's time, again for silence." (Alammar 166). Rana tries to block people whom she feels would wreak havoc to her mental peace and life. Helen, a minor character in the novel residing in south tower is another voiceless woman and a victim of female subjugation. She must bear with her

abusive husband daily. He only expects silence as an answer or acknowledgement from her to whatever he does. If she raises her voice for even a slight thing, he begins to thrash her violently and silence her. In the later part of the novel Helen emerges as a powerful female who uses silence as an agency by breaking the norms of patriarchy. She breaks the sacred institutions of marriage by leaving her husband forever. She has been practicing silence by bearing all the abuses her husband hurled at her all along and finally breaks free at a point. Just like Rana she has been observing and planning everything in silence. She appears to position herself as a voiceless woman to her husband, but she emerges as a powerful female character. For Helen therefore silence has been a symbol of hope and light all along her painstaking journey.

Breaking Silence through the Act Writing

Telling one's story allows an understanding of the impact of the threat. This process taps the strength of a different relationship, the therapeutic one. It begins with abreaction and moves through understanding and reworking to finally allow the internalized image of the victimizer to be put aside. As a result, psychological freedom becomes more possible." (Lister 7).

Rana affirms to these lines. Its only when she lets out the deepest secrets of her harrowing journey, she experiences a sense of fulfillment. "The Voiceless" therefore is the voice of resistance of her inner self. She also breaks silence when a need arises to save a choking old man from dying. She is not ready to witness another death before her eyes. The very trauma that once silenced her invokes her voice once again to save someone from entering the same trauma. She also takes a bold step in writing a police complaint on witnessing the murder of the shopkeeper Hassan.

Conclusion

Silence throughout the novel, has a profound significance. It creates a heightened sense of tension. Whatever is left unsaid pictures a reality. The reality

in Rana's case is her disillusionment, her pain and losses, her isolated existence and her constant rejection of companionship and love and finally her resolution to remain silent for the rest of her life. Psychologically she faces a loss of her known self and remains like a wounded animal throughout her life. Its through silence she observes the world around her and develops agency meticulously. "Silences tell (show) the reader more about the character. Silences are a means of providing spaces in the narrative for readers to reflect on what had just happened." (Taylor 2). Likewise, throughout the novel, Rana's interior monologues pave way for narrative empathy and during the ridicules she faces from the community. Her powerful observant eye and calm response to all accusations tell much more than words. Just as the very title of the book denotes, Silence is indeed a sense, a sense that needs a perfect craftsmanship.

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CULTURAL DEPRIVATION CONFRONTED BY KARNA IN KAVITHA KANE'S KARNA'S WIFE: THE OUTCAST'S QUEEN

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the cultural deprivation and marginalized character in Karna's wife, The outcast queen. It portrays the complex interplay of discrimination based on caste, gender identity and sociocultural. A caste is a system of injustice and inequality. Despite Karna's talent, society humiliated him of his identity as a low caste-sutaputra. The objective of the research is to explore how the culture isolates the group as low-caste. The caste system implies several causes of marginalization being a condition of Social exclusion. It exposes the cultural and individual reality, which reflects the cultural background of human practice on caste system. This system restricted lower caste people throughout the world from contributing to society. Characters faced restraints by cultural norms, social expectations, caste consciousness and systems of oppression. This article navigates the vision of unequal power relationship dynamics across social and cultural dimensions in Kavitha Kane's Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen.

Keywords: *discrimination, caste system, marginalization, deprivation, kavitha kane, identity crisis, oppression.*

Introduction

Kavitha Kane is contemplated as a nature of revolution in Indian writing. She is well known for her mythological fiction. Kane gave voice to marginalized characters and was least praised for the retelling of misunderstood and literally abused; her notion promotes new life in mythology, she uses mythology to portray contemporary issues, and her books were reconsidered Ancient Indian Myths. Her strong narrating style dealt with other contemporary readers. Her writings explore literary contributions. As a leading author with the success of her debut novel, "Karna's wife-The Outcast Queen". It is the retelling of Mahabharata from Uruvi's eyes. It made her transformation into a full-time writing career. Her ability to reimagine the story of iconic female characters and enlighten them on their untold stories, challenges and the act of social exclusion. Characters of Kavitha Kane's novel deliberate themselves from the oppression caused by the social norms.

The caste system and social discrimination are proved to be an inequality for low caste in their cultural deprivation and about resurrection to identity. In India during the Ancient period people were divided into four main groups, they were Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras. It clearly states that a person is deviated in the name of caste when they are born. In India, the Caste system reveals oppression and marginalization. During ancient times, education was provided only to a group of people. The skill is learned only by the high caste people, such as Karna, who got marginalized and humiliated, Though he had great skills and knowledge.

Karna is a towering character in the wide ocean of Indian mythology, renowned for his bravery but also distinguished by the terrible details of fate. But even in epics such as the Mahabharata, Karna's wife is frequently relegated to supporting roles. "Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen" by Kavitha Kane bravely fills in this narrative void by providing an

in-depth examination of the cultural deprivation that Karna's consort, Uruvi, must deal with. Even Guru Dronacharya can be seen as an oppressor who devalues Karna from being his student.

According to the rules of the game, only a Kshatriya, a high-born warrior, can fight another Kshatriya in a tournament.... His handsome face was sapped of its radiant pride.

His lips were clenched, and his noble head was bowed as if in shame. The proud archer suddenly appeared lost."(Karna's wife: 4)

This incident demonstrates how the caste system was active in India. In this novel, the author points out that 'caste' is the deciding factor of individual life. In India, caste cannot be exterminated. Inter-caste marriages were done by opposing all the norms of society. The upper-caste, high-born women who marry lower-caste men are called Pratiloma. Uruvi, princess of Pukeya, falls in love with Karna when she glimpses him in the archery tournament.

"Uruvi heard Bhimasena's derisive laughter. 'King of Anga indeed' you are but a son of our charioteer!' he sneered. 'Your father is Adhiratha, a charioteer in my uncle King Dhritrashtra's army. You are no prince; you are no warrior! All you need is a whip to drive the horses!... You are fit to rule the stables, not the kingdom of Anga!'" (Karna's wife: 5)

The novel travels through the halls of old Indian culture, where caste, ancestry, and social norms govern every aspect of life. Pukeya's princess Uruvi is thrown into a world where her love for Karna, a Suta (charioteer) by birth, turns into a conflict between deeply ingrained social stereotypes. Throughout the story, Kane expertly peels back the many aspects of this cultural deprivation, exploring its subtleties. "Karna's Wife" is fundamentally a moving critique of the caste system and how it affects interpersonal relationships. The strict confines of caste are broken by Uruvi's marriage to Karna, which invites derision and social exclusion. With a tangible reality, Kane captures Uruvi's struggle and the agony of being an outsider in a society where discrimination is predicated on caste.

"As a noble warrior, he was cast off for not being a Kshatriya. As an eligible suitor, he was disgraced for being of a lowly caste, a sutaputra-as princess Draupadi had pithily reminded him at her royal swayamwara"(Kavitha Kane:12)

The novel also gives a complex picture of gender relations in ancient Indian civilization. In order to declare her love for Karna, Uruvi shows herself to be a woman of agency and defies social norms. But patriarchal frameworks that try to put women in predetermined positions undermine their agency all the time. Through Uruvi's journey, Kane illuminates the strength and resiliency needed to survive in a society that actively suppresses the voices of women. Furthermore, "Karna's Wife" goes beyond its mythological setting to provide insightful perspectives on modern problems. Audiences from all cultural backgrounds can relate to the issue of cultural deprivation, which acts as a mirror to the institutionalized prejudices that still exist in contemporary society. Uruvi's search for identity and acceptance turns into a universal story of perseverance in the face of hardship.

"Uruvi reminded the veteran warrior, her voice sharpening, 'Neither did Guru Dronacharya and Kripacharya. Or you,' she dares to say, looking at him accusingly. 'Did you reprimand Bhima when he insulted and humiliated Karna by calling him a man of low birth?' (Kavitha Kane:63)

Kavitha Kane's skill as a storyteller is evident in the way she vividly captures situations and personalities. She brings readers to a bygone past filled with grandeur and conflict by bringing ancient India to life through elegant prose and painstaking research. Every page has a rich emotional resonance that beckons readers to relate to Uruvi's experience and face the terrible truths of cultural deprivation.

"Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen" is a literary classic that cuts beyond time and cultural barriers. By telling Uruvi's story, Kavitha Kane invites readers to confront the ingrained prejudices that exist across society while providing a comprehensive examination of cultural deprivation. Uruvi's fortitude acts as a ray of hope in a world

where prejudice still exists, showing us the enduring strength of love and tenacity. "All my life, I have endured taunts, insults and humiliation for being sutaputra ... I was a low-born sutaputra who had dared to dream" (Kavitha Kane:34)

Conclusion

In this retelling of Kavitha, Kane's epic discloses the caste system, which is perceived through the mythical characters of Mahabharata. As per this study, author Kavitha Kane reflects on the character's complex realities of human life. Her characters are the mirror of caste-conscious society. Thus, this study has an average experience of Karna, the epic character who is associated with the real world. His life is filled with traumas of alienation from his birth in society. Karna's life is a lesson for an individual whose life has been alienated by society. Every person in India has deliberately experienced the moments of embarrassment of an individual as Karna's life.

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CULINARY CHRONICLES OF RAJASTHAN: UNVEILING CULTURAL IDENTITY AND MEMORY IN RAJA RASOI AUR ANYA KAHANIYAAN

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Abstract

The cuisine of a place is connected to the geography and culture of a place. Raja, Rasoi Aur Anya Kahaniyaan is a culinary history show portraying the cuisines of different states of India. The pilot episode of the series set in Rajasthan unveils the gastronomic history of Rajasthan ranging from the streets to the royal cuisine. This research attempts to study the intricate connection between food and culture as portrayed in the series. The study also attempts to explore the interlinkage between food and memory. The narratives surrounding food depicts how certain culinary habits evolved and integrated into culinary history of Rajasthan. The study delineates into explore how cuisines of Rajasthan acts as a mnemonic tool in preserving the cultural memory of a place. The paper also examines how cuisines of Rajasthan constitute the prime component in cultural identity formation.

Keywords: *food, culinary history, memory, identity, rajasthan's gastronomic history*

Food is an integral part of every culture; it is tangible manifestation of social and cultural identity. Eating practices such as what we eat and how do we eat have cultural significance. Theodore Bestor, Harvard anthropologist opines that the culinary imagination is a way a culture conceptualizes and imagines food. A multicultural country like India have not a single unique cuisine but diverse cuisines in various states and regions in India. Multiple cuisines stand for the heterogeneous nature of food in India. Food is not just a means of survival in India but also a marker of cultural, religious, ethnic and caste identity.

The intricate connection between food and culture has been explored by many cultural anthropologists. Claude Levi Strauss, the famous cultural anthropologist in his essay *The Raw and the Cooked* equates cooking like language, to a cultural process. He explored the nature culture binary in the culinary level; cooking acts as a primary

differentiator between humans and animals. When the food undergoes cooking, it undergoes a cultural process created by humans. He proposes the concept of Culinary Triangle to explain cooking as a cultural practice. At top end of the triangle, he placed the raw food, on one end, he placed the cooked and the other end the rotted. Raw food becomes cooked food by various means such as boiling or roasting which are cultural transformation while raw food becomes rotten by the natural process. The cook acts as a cultural agent that transforms the raw to the cooked. He also categorises cooking into roasted, boiled and smoking and by studying the various tribal cuisines he reaches the conclusion that roasting is the primary form of cooking while boiled and smoking constitute the advanced stages in cooking.

Mary Douglas in her work *Deciphering a meal* identifies meal as a code. Food categories encode social events; the meanings in the food system

reveal a structure that embodies the social connection. The two major contrasted food categories are drinks and meals where in drinks are for strangers while meals reflect close friendship. Douglas posits the meaning of meal as:

The meaning of a meal is found in a system of repeated analogies. Each meal carries something of the meaning of the other meals; each meal is a structured social event which structures others in its own image. The upper limit of its meaning is set by the range incorporated in the most important member of its series. The recognition which allowseach member to be classed and graded with the others depends upon the structure common to them all. (Douglas, 69)

Claude Fischer in his work *Food, Self and Identity* delve into the interrelation between food and identity formation. The identity of a person is constructed biologically, psychologically and socially by the food that they eat. People identifies their culture through their cuisine; as it helps to establish a strong root to their culture. *Raja Rasoi Aur Anya Kahaniyaan* portrays the intricate connection between the local cuisine and identity of people in that region. This paper attempts to study the significance of cuisine in preserving the cultural memories and it also analyses the significance of history of food in the formation of a cultural identity.

The geography of a place plays a pivotal role in the development of a region's cuisine. Rajasthan has harsh climatic conditions with arid soil and less vegetation. Marwar, a prominent region in Rajasthan, known for hospitality; the culture and the history of Marwar is represented by its cuisine. Marwar is referred as the land of death as majority of land area is desert with less vegetation. Khejri tree/ Kalpathru referred as the wish fulfilling tree is the backbone of every village in Marwar. The cuisine of Marwar consist of local ingredients which make their dishes unique. Rachel Lauden posits that "Cuisines evolve gradually as new techniques are discovered, new plants are incorporated or as they are transferred by the migrants." (Lauden, 6) Traditional foods of Mawar are results of the process of innovations by

the regional cooks with limited ingredients. The perfect example is the dish *Panchkutta* which is made by mixing the leaves of Khejri tree and wild berries such as Ker, Kumad and sangli. Another dish is *Laal Maas*, which uses the locally grown mathaniya chilli. Mathaniya chilli came to Rajasthan in seventeenth century when the then king gave the local farmers seeds of mathaniya chilli. Eating chilli in hot region such as Rajasthan serves medicinal purpose as it prevents in thinning of the blood.

Food is often tied to memories and emotions. When individuals prepare and share traditional recipes through personal anecdotes and stories related to the dishes. These narratives serve as the cultural significance of food as a vessel for preserving memories both individual and collective. David Sutton in his work *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* explores the connection between food and memory. His fieldwork on the Greek Island of Kalymnos investigates how food is used in their daily life and ritual practices. Another aspect in the connection between food and memory explored through the way in which a person in the community gives food to others which creates a memorable impression about the person, whether the person is generous or stingy. According to David Sutton, "food memories constitute historical consciousness" (Sutton, 26).

In the series *Raja, Rasoi Aur Anya Kahaniyaan* discusses two stories which are popular in Rajasthan. The former story discusses the battle between King Maldev and Sher Shah Suri in 1543. As the story goes, the Sher Shah Suri's army were eighty thousand in strength while Rathore army only constitute fifty thousand. The Rathore army evolved victorious even after being lesser in number as compared to the opponent's army. King Maldev attributes the victory to baati or pearl millet as the Rathore army grew in strength consuming baati. This legendary story reveals the cultural significance of baati/ pearl millet. Pearl Millet is a staple food of Rajasthan; as it is suitable to the climate of Rajasthan requiring less water and a lot of heat. Food memory associated with pearl millet manifest a sense of

belongingness and cultural identity to the people of Rajasthan.

The latter narrative is about the dish *Kheench*; a sweet dish which is popular in Rajasthan. As per the story, Rao Jodha, the king of Rajasthan lost control of his fort for some time. When he was at Marwar, he visited a Jat's hut in the disguise of a common man. Gudiya, the woman of the house served him kheench and on eating the kheench, Rao Jodha's hand got burnt as it was too hot. Gudiya advised him to eat kheench from the sides and then proceed to the centre. This conversation not only taught Rao Jodha how to eat Kheench but also inspired him to get his fort back by attacking his enemies from the sides. The relatability of the story creates a historical consciousness with the dish *Kheench*.

Bahi Khata is a hand written manuscript maintained in the Umaid Bhavan palace during the 17th, 18th and 19th century which is an account of daily activities; it would encompass the list of daily foods made, the number of people who came to dine, their where abouts and purpose of the visit. According to Natwar Singh, the now kitchen manager of Umaid Bhavan palace, Bahi Khata also gives an account of the protocols of dining in the palace. Gold, silver and bronze cutlery were used for serving food and the cutlery used corresponds to the social status of the person; gold for the most significant and bronze for the less significant. Bahi Khata serves as an important historical and mnemonic tool which informs us of the culinary customs of Umaid Bhavan.

Khad Khargosh, represents the interconnection between food practices and hunting. Zebunisa, a chef has learned about Khad Khargosh from her father Ahmed Khan who was also a chef. She narrates that in earlier times when they went for hunting, Kings would hunt wild animals and then they cook it there and consumes it. This practice of hunting and dining gave rise to dish called Khad Khargosh; a local dish made by cooking rabbit.

The history of food coincides with the cultural history of a place. Rajasthan's food culture is

intertwined with Rajput, Bengali and Marwar. Matrimonial alliances between states influence the culture, architecture and cuisine of the states as the new princess is accompanied by chefs from her state. The mughal influence on Rajasthan's cuisine can be traced back to the 16th and 17th century as the mughal emperor Akbar married Rajput's princess Jodha. Dharmender Kanwar, a prominent travel writer in the show attributes the mughal influence on cuisine to Rajasthan's proximity to Agra, the mughal capital. The fish got introduced in Rajasthan when Maharani Gayatri Devi came to Rajasthan after her marriage from Bengal. The cooking parties were introduced by Gayatri Devi and which resulted in the cooking experiments. Chef Jaswant Singh recipe books threw light on the cooking experiments and he has written more than three thousand recipes.

Amar Singh's diary constitutes a valuable document as it contains more than one lakh recipes and it is also one of the biggest diaries. The rituals and festivals in India often align with harvest season. The diary contains mention of various festivals and associated food recipes. One such festival mentioned and which is widely celebrated in Rajasthan is *Sharadpoornima* where in people of Rajasthan wear white clothes and consume white food under moonlight. The festival of *Sharadpoornima* is celebrated irrespective of social status as it is a harvest festival. The traditional foods prepared are passed down from one generation to another offering a sense of community and belonging. The celebration and dining during the festival imprints the tradition of Rajasthan which is in turn their identity.

The episode in the introduction discusses the traditional culinary practices and its connection to the geography of Rajasthan, and then discusses the culinary practices of the royals and their cooking parties. The last segment portrays the street dishes in Rajasthan and its significance to the tradition and culture. Dishes such as Papad (thin Indian wafer) and Achar (pickle) elucidate how preserving food is quotidian phenomenon in the households of Rajasthan. The geography of the place calls for the preservation of food. The food preservation

techniques can be found in Manusmriti, an ancient religious text. The traditional food recipes and culinary practices of Rajasthan not only enrich the culture of Rajasthan but also create a historical consciousness.

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MURDERED LOVE, CRADLED HONOR: AN ANALYSIS OF PERUMAL MURUGAN'S 'PYRE'

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Abstract

Human race makes advancements in various fields to exhibit their supremacy over other creatures, plans to build house in Mars, to create a new world for living, underworld exploration, research on Aliens and many other to become omnipotent, yet fails to understand that the base for very existence of human kind is to be 'kind'. The primitive people toiled themselves in this land for their survival, the civilized became extremists for their pride. These chauvinists divided people according to their convenience based on caste, creed, race and exploited humanity and love for other humans. The discrimination gave vent to the beast inside human beings which made them express their brutality and to exhibit their dominance over the submissive. For centuries this cruelty is continuing, remarkable revolutionists tried bringing a change in the society, still this inhumanity is persisting. Literature incessantly records this violation, however no visible changes are seen. Segregation, discrimination, oppression, domination are identified concepts in literary works. Apart from these there are few threatening concepts remaining as a latent area in literature.

Keywords: *honor, violation, murder, exploitation, casteism, discrimination*

Perumal Murugan, a prolific writer boldly brought many taboo topics into limelight through his writings, 'Pyre', a short novel is another feather on his cap which once again proved that, "Pen is mightier than sword". He was criticized for his daring attempts on revealing the customs followed in the rustic parts of Tamil Nadu and the unquestioned prevailing discrimination existing in the society. Despite the objection raised he remains stable to discuss the restricted norms and talk on behalf of the deprived people by analyzing an event from their perspective. Life, culture, belief, pride of rustic people are naturally presented through the characters in this novel. 'Pyre' is published in Tamil in the year 2013 and translated into English by Aniruddhan Vasudevan in 2016, it was longlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2017.

Saroja and Kumaresan travel with the stigma of discrimination throughout the novel. People feel

superior of themselves based on their race, color, creed, nationality, caste and try to overpower others by framing ideologies that suit their beliefs. Prejudice and stereotyping plays a major role in all the discriminatory activities that are prevalent in society. The savage people considered Saroja to be an insignificant creature and treated her as a worm, not even a single supporter she gained in her husband's village. Dystopian reality shattered the dreams of Saroja, as she fancied to live in the world of utopia after her marriage with Kumaresan. Caste system is the oldest form which is alive and fresh till date, it would remain the same even after many centuries. The earlier script segregated mankind based on the work which they were destined to do, later within that discrimination many subdivisions sprouted and demarcation rooted strongly. It is to be understood that if you consider someone belongs to the lower caste, and you belong to the upper caste, it

silently means that you enjoy this system of discrimination, and silently accept that there is a superior caste above yours and you are lower to him. This silent approval is a submission to all the discrimination, an epidemic in the society. Money, power, beauty, popularity becomes insignificant in front of caste. People identify your caste with your face, skin tone, accessories, dialect, rituals and many other cultural codes, few would simply trace your history by enquiring about your native place and probing your street name. In metropolitan cities the questions may not be obvious, yet slowly people would map out your roots and they would delineate themselves from you if you don't belong to their ranking. In rural areas, estimation is done visibly and based on their assessment they treat you.

The joy of marriage, expectation of a new bride, love of a fresh relationship is withered often by the spear-like words of Marayi, mother of Kumaresan. This young widow has sacrificed her life to raise Kumaresan, naturally her affection for him is thick, yet, her affinity towards her caste is even more stronger which made her curse him often. She seeks an opportunity to find fault with the young couple as she considers Saroja has cast some spell on Kumaresan, causing him to fall at her feet.

Women are always considered as the reason for the downfall of any society, even in this novel Kumaresan falls in love, makes her leave her family and elope with him, ironically it was she who was blamed by all the people in his village. All over the world in all the stories women are depicted as the reason for the dishonor and they are punished brutally. The prejudiced opinion in the society is that, by not safeguarding the norms, it is believed that women bring shame to their family and to their community/ caste/religion. Honor killing takes place because of the aggression resulting from 'lost honor'-losing one's license for social participation. This is the mechanism followed to maintain their social bonds and sense of community. It is always a question why women are always targeted? The answer would be that it is the punishment for the deviation from morality and ethics. It is the need of the hour

that the community should understand that honor killing is an act of murder and not the preservation of their reputation.

In the novel *Pyre*, Saroja is humiliated by all at every instance despite obliging to the words of Kumaresan that she remained without conversing to anyone. Tholur was her heaven where she led a carefree life by taking care of her father, brother and her house. Discrimination was an unheard term in Tholur, it was only the character Mythili who was a puzzle to her, who never accepted or allowed other people to enter into her house, even then she didn't know the strangeness of casteism. The humiliation encountered by the couple at Kumaresan's maternal uncle's home is unexpected and shocking, as he strongly believed that they would accept the couple without any inhibitions as he was the apple of eye to Marayi's parents and uncles.

'Casteism' is still prevalent in rural areas and it is exhibited in the way of treatment. Kumaresan's grandmother offers water to Saroja, "but then pulled her hand back. She went back inside again and returned with a lead tumbler" (100), a cruel discrimination called the 'double-tumbler' system which is common in many places. Kumaresan's love for Saroja was very thick and determined not to leave her at any cost, yet Saroja had a fear of losing him because of the threatful behavior of the village inmates. Marayi often shouts and sings dirges exhibiting her disapproval of their marriage. Women made fun of her way of dressing and blamed her that she would have mesmerized Kumaresan with magic spells, in essence they mocked her lack of discipline. Both men and women fell for her fair skin and beautiful physique, women openly exhibited their jealousy and men awaited the opportunity to get hold of her. Vellapayan, Kumaresan's cousin tried to impress her but knowing his intentions she kept herself away from him. In the last chapter when she hides herself behind the bush, he wishes to utilize the opportunity to molest her despite the crowd gathered there as, "we can still enjoy her once we've caught her" (188). Raping or sexually exploiting a woman of the lower caste (according to the people who

believe in caste system) is justified as they consider this violation to be a granted liberty or privilege provided to their caste.

The sadistic minded people failed to approve her marriage but they were ready to accept extramarital affair or polygamy, this is exhibited when menfolk advised Kumaresan to marry another girl from their own caste which was sarcastically questioned by the women as, “Are you asking him to find a fair one and ride a double bullock cart?” (26), shocking words heard by Saroja makes her more insecure. After Kumaresan leaves the place, she lives in darkness and avoids the people who come to meet her mother-in-law. The fear to safeguard her life restricts her to answer the nature’s calls, she awaits the arrival of her husband and he takes her to the near bush and stands as a guardian which relaxes her, unfortunately this regular activity is noted by Marayi and in turn she informs the villagers which made them to decide her end in a barbaric way.

Amidst the inequalities faced by Saroja, Kumaresan and memories of Tholur stands as her solace. However, she never fails to curse Kumaresan for coming to Tholur and becoming the reason for her present sufferings which transformed her from a butterfly to a cloistered caterpillar. She is horrified at the villagers when she learns that they visited Tholur to know about her caste which made her understand the seriousness of the situation. Idle and aloof she spent her days with no hope, even the expected arrival of a newborn brought in no joy to her.

A visit to Virichipalayam refreshes the mind of Saroja and instills hope in her life. Kumaresan’s decision of starting his own soda company made her happy as she wished to lead a peaceful life where no discrimination exists. Life is full of surprises and shocks, for quite some days she was loaded with shocking events and shameful abuses, now she accepts the painful days with the strong hope of her future life at Virichipalayam. She consoles herself that these hell full days are coming to an end soon to be followed by jubilant days.

Kumaresan’s cycle bell sound is a magical drink to Saraja, as soon as she hears the ringing sound she

gets rejuvenated, everyday she yearns for the resonance till he returns from his new found soda shop. Perumal Murugan builds the turmoil in the initial chapter by introducing the character of an Uncle who terrifies Saroja by the plethora of questions filled with sarcasm which makes her gauge the mindset of people in his village. The turbulence creates fear in the mind of Saroja which makes her feel insecure and laments her decision of leaving her brother, father and Tholur which were a heaven for her. Decisions made by human beings at a crucial period becomes a life- turning event in one’s life. Saroja’s consent to leave with Kumaresan was not a climactic choice, however it's an outcome of her desire to live with her beloved forever. The fear of losing Kumaresan directed her to deceive her family members. The concept of honor was unheard of by Saroja till date when she was in Tholur, Kattuppatti taught her the darker side of life, she slowly understood the term Honor and still couldn’t understand the reason behind considering her marriage as a heinous crime.

The plot revolves around three places- Tholur, Kattuppatti, Virichipalayam, the people, their lifestyle, beliefs and culture. Saroja is the epicenter of the novel, their inhabitants mindset, ideologies, mentality serves as a threatening factor throughout her life. Her mind oscillates between the thoughts of Tholur and reality of Kattuppatti, it is only after her jaunt to Virichipalayam brings a paradigm shift in her thought process, as she starts building hope about her life with Kumaresan and her child. She yearns to move away from the uncultured people who had no mercy upon the innocent girl who stepped into their village with dreams and desire to lead a joyful life.

A shocking revelation is that more than men, it's women who favor honor killing because of the pride which they hold towards their caste/ community/ religion. Though women are treated submissive by menfolk, they think that they have the authority to preserve the future of their own status based on any discrimination put forth by the society. Women are denied education which gives them supreme power to acquire knowledge and to change society. If

women start to think, they would come with revolutionary thoughts which would become remarkable changes in the new world. Unfortunately, women are not given liberty to have awareness about the changes happening in the world. Men hold the authority over the life of women, they smartly make their spouse take decisions of household chores like cooking, nurturing the kids, and other cleaning works, this makes women think that they are powerful and hold the upper hand on the domestic related issues pertaining to their home and their community, however in reality they have no power over their own life itself. This is the strategy imbibed by menfolk for centuries, where slowly they poison the minds of their women and make them as victims to accomplish their task, yet women fail to realize the importance of their existence. In order to maintain a culturally strong society the women take the power and authority in their hands and punish another woman who is considered as the root cause for the dishonor caused.

The people who support honor killing have greater attachment towards their group values and they also have the fear of losing their esteem among their community. The landlords, head of the village, old men from a village pass a verdict against women when these cross marriages happen, so these people are celebrated. They resolve the issue by justifying the murder as Honor killing, a solution for trespassing the regulations put forth by their community. The alarming and horrifying incidents surmounts in the last few chapters and the readers could feel empathetic with the character of Saroja, as no other character in the novel could be justified for their beastly punishment. Innocence is incarnated through

the character of Kumaresan as he trusted his mother beyond the villagers, which made him stay in virichipalayam for a day in order to complete the work for his soda shop. Unexpectedly, his dreams are burned into ashes before he reaches Saroja. Earnestly she prayed for the arrival of Kumaresan till her last moment, amidst the brutal and horrible noise of kattuppatti village people she searched for the bicycle sound of Kumaresan, when it was heard she became nothing.

'Pyre' talks about the sad reality of the discrimination still existing in this era in mankind which is justified with various suppositions. The honor of their pure love is murdered in the name of preservation of their honor and values. The love life of a young couple rooted in Tholur, traveled to Kattuppatti and ended there before they moved to virichipalayam to start their life. Love is a beautiful and natural feeling gifted to mankind to make their life interesting and more meaningful, however few ruthless, cruel, hegemonic people smashes it under the foot of caste, discrimination, honor and other terms conducive to justify their monstrous, bestial, sadistic punishment.

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THE ART OF TEACHING ENGLISH: EXPLORING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

"The Art of Teaching English: Exploring Creativity and Innovation in Education" delves into the dynamic realm of English language instruction, where creativity and innovation are paramount. This article examines how educators are redefining traditional teaching methods to engage students in the intricacies of language learning. From incorporating multimedia resources and digital tools to fostering a culture of experimentation and embracing diverse learning styles, English teachers are transforming classrooms into vibrant hubs of linguistic exploration. By harnessing the power of creativity and innovation, educators are not only imparting language skills but also nurturing critical thinking, communication, and cultural awareness. This abstract offers insights into how the art of teaching English is evolving to meet the diverse needs of students in an ever-changing global landscape.

Keywords: *innovation, creativity, digital tools, critical thinking & education*

Developing Creativity in English Language Teaching

The key for teaching English effectively is creativity, the capacity to enthral, excite, and give pupils the freedom to express them clearly and boldly. Educators are tapping into their creative reservoirs to design engaging lesson plans that resonate with learners of diverse backgrounds and learning styles. From storytelling and role-playing activities to multimedia presentations and project-based learning, the modern English classroom is a canvas for imaginative exploration. Interactive activities are invaluable tools for promoting creativity and engagement in the English classroom. Whether it's through group discussions, debates, role-playing scenarios, or collaborative projects, these activities encourage students to actively participate in the learning process, express their ideas, and interact with their peers in meaningful ways. By creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment, educators can empower students to explore language concepts creatively and develop their communication skills with confidence.

Storytelling is a powerful medium for language acquisition and expression. Educators can harness the art of storytelling to captivate students' attention, stimulate their imagination, and deepen their understanding of language and culture. Whether it's through reading aloud, creating original stories, or analyzing literary texts, storytelling allows students to connect with the language on a personal level and explore complex themes and ideas in a meaningful context.

Creative writing offers students a platform to unleash their creativity, experiment with language, and express themselves authentically. From poetry and short stories to essays and journal entries, writing assignments provide opportunities for students to explore their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in English. By encouraging risk-taking and self-expression, educators can nurture students' confidence as writers and cultivate a lifelong love for writing and literature.

In today's digital age, educators have access to a wealth of multimedia resources and technologies that can enrich the English learning experience. From

videos and podcasts to interactive websites and digital storytelling tools, these multimodal approaches offer dynamic opportunities for students to engage with language in diverse formats and contexts. By incorporating multimedia elements into their lessons, educators can cater to different learning preferences and enhance students' comprehension and retention of language concepts.

Embracing Innovation through Technology

Innovation in English education extends beyond traditional teaching methods to embrace the transformpower of technology. Digital tools and online resources offer new avenues for language acquisition, enabling students to engage with authentic materials and interact with English speakers from around the world. Virtual reality simulations, language learning apps, and collaborative platforms facilitate immersive learning experiences, bridging the gap between the classroom and the global community.

Language learning apps have transformed the way students engage with English outside the classroom. These interactive platforms offer a wide range of features, including vocabulary drills, grammar exercises, and interactive games, that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Multimedia resources, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive websites, offer dynamic opportunities for students to engage with English in diverse formats and contexts. These resources provide authentic language input and expose students to different accents, dialects, and cultural perspectives. By incorporating language learning apps into their curriculum, educators can provide students with personalized learning experiences that reinforce language skills and promote independent study.

Digital collaboration platforms, such as Google Workspace, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, enable educators and students to connect and collaborate in virtual learning environments. These platforms facilitate real-time communication, collaboration, and feedback, allowing students to work together on projects, share ideas, and engage in collaborative learning activities. By leveraging digital

collaboration tools, educators can create inclusive and interactive learning experiences that promote active participation and peer collaboration. Educators can enhance students' comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and listening skills while fostering a deeper appreciation for English-language media and culture.

Online language exchange programs provide students with the opportunity to interact with native speakers of English and practice their language skills in authentic communication settings. These programs enable students to engage in conversational practice, cultural exchange, and language immersion experiences from the comfort of their own homes. By participating in online language exchange programs, students can improve their speaking, listening, and communication skills while gaining insight into different cultures and perspectives.

Empowering Student Voice and Choice in the English Classroom

Central to the art of teaching English is the recognition of students as active participants in their language learning journey. Educators adopt student-centered pedagogies that prioritize autonomy and agency, allowing learners to tailor their learning experience to their interests and goals. By offering choice in topics, projects, and assessment methods, teachers empower students to take ownership of their learning and develop a sense of ownership over the English language.

At the core of empowering student voice and choice lies a student-centered approach to teaching and learning. This pedagogical approach prioritizes the interests, needs, and experiences of students, allowing them to take an active role in shaping their learning path. By incorporating student input into lesson planning, providing opportunities for self-directed learning, and offering choices in assignments and assessments, educators can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that honors the diversity of learners and promotes intrinsic motivation.

Personalized learning experiences allow students to tailor their learning journey to their individual

interests, strengths, and learning styles. Educators can provide students with choice boards, learning menus, or project-based learning opportunities that allow them to pursue topics of personal relevance and explore areas of interest within the English curriculum. By accommodating students' diverse needs and preferences, educators can foster a sense of ownership and investment in learning, leading to increased engagement and academic achievement. Giving student's choice in assignments and assessments allows them to demonstrate their understanding of English language and literature in ways that align with their interests, strengths, and goals. Educators can offer a variety of assessment options, such as essays, presentations, projects, or multimedia creations that allow students to showcase their learning in creative and meaningful ways. By providing choice in how they demonstrate their knowledge and skills, educators can foster a sense of autonomy and agency in students, leading to increased motivation and academic engagement.

In an increasingly interconnected world, proficiency in English goes beyond linguistic competence-it requires cultural awareness and sensitivity. Innovative English teachers integrate cultural content and global perspectives into their curriculum, fostering empathy and understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. Through literature, film, and discussions on global issues, learners gain insight into different cultures and develop the skills needed to navigate multicultural contexts with confidence and respect.

Nurturing Lifelong Learners

The goal of English instruction extends beyond teaching language skills; it aims to cultivate lifelong learners who are equipped with the curiosity, adaptability, and self-motivation to continue learning long after they leave the classroom. This section explores strategies and approaches that educators can employ to nurture lifelong learners in the context of English language education, fostering a passion for language and literature that extends beyond academic achievement. At the heart of nurturing lifelong learners in English instruction lies a love for reading.

Educators can instill a passion for literature by exposing students to a wide range of texts that reflect diverse cultures, perspectives, and genres. An independent reading, group discussions, and literary analysis, educators can cultivate critical thinking skills, empathy, and a lifelong appreciation for the power of storytelling.

Connecting learning to real-world contexts is essential for nurturing lifelong learners in English instruction. Educators can create opportunities for students to apply their language skills and knowledge to authentic tasks and projects that have relevance beyond the classroom. By integrating real-world examples, current events, and community connections into their curriculum, educators can help students see the value and applicability of English language and literature in their everyday lives.

Encouraging curiosity and inquiry is keys to nurturing lifelong learners in English instruction. Educators can create opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and discovery by posing open-ended questions, encouraging student-led inquiries, and providing opportunities for research and investigation. By fostering a spirit of curiosity and inquiry, educators can ignite students' passion for learning and empower them to take ownership of their intellectual development.

Cultivating a growth mindset is essential for nurturing lifelong learners in English instruction. Educators can encourage students to embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, and view mistakes as opportunities for growth and learning. By providing constructive feedback, celebrating effort and progress, and promoting a positive attitude towards learning, educators can empower students to develop resilience, confidence, and a lifelong commitment to personal and academic growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the art of teaching English is a dynamic and multifaceted endeavor that requires creativity, innovation, and a deep commitment to student growth and development. From unleashing creativity in the classroom to embracing innovative technologies, empowering student voice and choice

and nurturing lifelong learners, it is evident that the landscape of English language education is evolving rapidly to meet the diverse needs of learners in the 21st century. By embracing creativity and innovation in English instruction, educators have the power to inspire, motivate, and empower the next generation of language learners. To adapt to the ever-changing landscape of education, it is essential to prioritize creativity, innovation, and student-centered approaches in English instruction. By fostering a love for language learning, cultivating critical thinking skills, and nurturing lifelong learners, educators can empower students to become active participants in their own education and thrive in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. In the end, the art of teaching English is not just about imparting language skills; it is about inspiring a passion for learning, fostering a sense of curiosity and inquiry, and empowering students to become confident and competent communicators who are equipped to succeed in whatever path they choose to pursue. As educators, let's continue to explore new horizons, push the boundaries of traditional teaching

methods, and unlock the full potential of English language education for the benefit of all learners.

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UNRAVELLING THE MAGIC OF MAGICAL REALISM IN *MISTRESS OF SPICES*

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Abstract

The novel Mistress of Spices by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni deftly weaves together issues of identity, belonging, and the strength of tradition with the genre of magical realism. The story, which takes place in an enchanted spice shop in Oakland, California, centers on Tilo, the Mistress of Spices, who uses her spices to heal and have mystical powers over people's lives. The lines between reality and magic become more hazy as Tilo balances her twin roles as a woman desiring love and connection and a protector of tradition. Divakaruni transports readers to a world where spices serve more than just food—they are also tools for spiritual and emotional healing—through her rich and sensuous words. The novel explores the intricacies of human relationships and the age-old conflict between duty and personal fulfillment as Tilo wrestles with the ethical implications of her talents and faces the constraints of her own wants. Mistress of Spices, viewed through the prism of magical realism, takes readers on an enthralling voyage of self-discovery where the fantastical meets the everyday and the mystical meets the commonplace, ultimately exposing important truths about the human condition and the transforming influence of love and custom.

Keywords: *magical realism, identity, tradition, transformation, belonging*

Indian writing in literary studies encompasses the analysis of literature from the Indian subcontinent, spanning various genres such as novels, poetry, short stories, and drama. This diverse body of work reflects India's rich cultural, linguistic, and historical tapestry. Scholars delve into themes like colonialism, post-colonialism, regional identities, mythology, religion, and diaspora experiences, examining how Indian writers navigate socio-political issues and cultural contexts. With major literary traditions in languages like Sanskrit, Tamil, Bengali, and Hindi, each with distinct styles and themes, the field also involves translation to foster cross-cultural understanding. Notable authors such as Rabindranath Tagore, Arundhati Roy, R.K. Narayan, and Jhumpa Lahiri contribute to discussions on identity, globalization, and representation, making Indian literature a rich area of study within literary discourse.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, a celebrated Indian-American author, is renowned for her compelling exploration of the Indian immigrant journey and the complexities of identity, culture, and relationships. Born in Kolkata, India, she later moved to the United

States for her studies. Through her novels, short stories, poetry collections, and essays, Divakaruni skillfully weaves together elements of Indian mythology, history, and folklore with contemporary narratives, addressing themes like diaspora experiences, women's lives, family dynamics, and the quest for belonging. Notable works include *The Mistress of Spices*, where a woman's mystical connection to spices influences lives, *Sister of My Heart*, depicting the inseparable bond between cousins in Kolkata, and *The Palace of Illusions*, offering a feminist reinterpretation of the Mahabharata. Divakaruni's storytelling captivates with its vibrant characters and offers profound insights into human experiences, earning her widespread acclaim and establishing her as a significant voice in modern literature.

Magical realism, a literary genre originating primarily in Latin American literature, seamlessly blends elements of the fantastical with the mundane, creating a narrative universe where magical occurrences are accepted as part of everyday life. Writers like Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, and Jorge Luis Borges popularized this style,

characterized by its coexistence of ordinary and magical elements, symbolic use of magical elements to represent deeper truths, and blurred boundaries between reality and fantasy. Often rooted in cultural context, magical realism employs nonlinear narrative structures and fluidity of time and space, offering readers a unique exploration of complex themes and universal truths about the human experience. This genre, while beginning in Latin America, has spread globally, influencing literature across diverse cultural backgrounds and regions.

The Mistress of Spices by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a spellbinding tale of Tilo, a woman with magical powers derived from spices, who runs a spice shop in Oakland, California. Endowed with the ability to help customers by prescribing spices for their desires, Tilo struggles to maintain the delicate balance between compassion for her clients and adherence to the rules set by the mystical "First Mother." Set against the backdrop of the tension between tradition and modernity, the novel delves into themes of love, sacrifice, and identity, as Tilo navigates her struggles and encounters a diverse array of characters. Divakaruni's lush prose and vivid imagery transport readers on a journey filled with enchantment and emotional depth, offering profound insights into the complexities of the human experience.

The Mistress of Spices delves between the characters' everyday lives and the mysterious realm of magic. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni skillfully combines the fantastical and the tangible. Divakaruni creates a new enchanted realm by stepping beyond the boundaries of multidisciplinary work. She has projected the mystical aspects of her works using dreams as a key approach. Her novel's magic realism reveals and explains the magical happenings that occur in people's lives, such as dreams, telepathy, and intuition that hint at things to come. With a stronger emphasis on myth and magic realism, the book explores the experience of being an immigrant.

Tilo, also known as Tilotamma, is a mistress of spices and a priestess of their occult magical abilities. She is an eternal lady endowed with exceptional abilities who was schooled in the age-old

craft of spice making. She adores the spices. She can employ the unique and particular qualities found in spices to heal the ailments of immigrants or the local Indian expat population in the United States. She is in control of the spices. Tilo possesses extraordinary foresight from birth. Her name, Nayan Tara, Star of the Eye, translates to the flower growing by the dust road and the star seer. Although her parents ignore her and leave her alone, she eventually attracts everyone's attention due to her second sight. She can foresee certain events, and her family benefits financially from her influence. As soon as word of her fame spread, the pirates forcibly kidnapped her. Despite her name, Bhagyavati (Bringer of Luck), she quickly deposes their ruler and ascends to the position of Pirate Queen. She eventually creates a storm to get away from the pirates, and the sea serpents come to her aid. The sea serpents inform her of an elderly woman who governs the next island and wish for her to become the Sarpakanya. The elderly woman would impart the skill of spices on the island known as The Island of Spices.

She feels as though she has given name to her desire and is driven to master the art of spices. Tilo travels to the island, enduring many challenges, to fulfill her ambition, and she tells the elderly woman that she wants to become her mistress. One must give up their desire to become a mistress. After the mistresses consent to the terms, they are transformed into elderly women and forced to enter Shampathi's fire for purification. When Tilo says she wants to be called Tilo, the older person is hesitant since Tilottama, an apsara, is in Lord Indra's court and gets punished for her want. Tilo enters the shampathi's fire and swears to the elderly one that she will never fall.

The ancient one offers her a dagger to keep her away from her wants before she enters the Shampathi's fire. To keep her firm in her vows, the elderly man also gives her a slice of ginger root. She walks into the center of Shapathi's fire and awakens in Oakland as the elderly Tilotamma. When she seems to be breaking the mistress's law, the spices seem to have some sort of influence over her and resist her actions.

Tilo finds the right spices there and provides them to the folks who come to her with the difficulties they have. Every spice has a certain day, and occasionally they would sing a song in her hands. She struggles to balance her need for separation from stressful situations with compassion for others who need her assistance. In the book, the tension between duty and love serves as a catalyst. The young woman Ahuja's wife used to visit her shop once a week. She was forced into marriage to Ahuja. As a watchman, her husband forbids her from working, claiming that it is the responsibility of men. Tilo gives her turmeric in the hopes of inspiring hope. After a long period, Ahuja's wife comes into her shop and says she can no longer stand her husband. Tilo gives her some advice and begs her and him to eat fennel, saying it will give them the fortitude to endure life's hardships. Tilo assisted Haroun, a cab driver who was dissatisfied with his line of work. Before the vision comes true, Tilo decides to assist Haroun.

She decides on Kalojire, a spice. Kalojire: a spice from the dark planet Ketu that wards off evil energy. A young Indian child named Jagjit struggles to fit in in the United States. Because of his language, his pals taunt and bully him. Tilo puts cinnamon under Jaggi's turban to assist him. The spice gives the body and mouth power and destroys adversaries. He finds the strength to speak out against the horrors committed by his American comrades. Later, spices begin to work against Jagjit to punish Tilo for disobeying the mistresses' banned rule. Tilo gives him manjistha to cool the blood and make it pure in an attempt to heal him.

Indian girl Geeta is a member of a Bengali family. Everyone in the family disapproved of Geeta's declaration that she loved a man, so Tilo brought them all back together. She crushes Kesar and almond powder for him to boil in milk. Tilo's spices turn against her as she decides to meet Geeta in her office. She offers ada for deeper courage and methi for healing breaks along with mango pickle. The same night, Tilo experiences a dream in which she converses with the First Mother via the

boundaries of time and space. In her business, she senses the presence of the Old One. She is translucent and undetectable. "Don't allow America to reduce you to unimaginable tragedies. Dreaming of love shouldn't awaken hateful spices.

Raven enters the store, and Tilo is unable to read his thoughts. She can't seem to find him a spice. When the mistress cannot obtain a special spice, she might use the root spice, mahamul, to improve luck, bring success, and joy, and prevent bad luck. Tilo adores the lone American named Raven. Raven is enamored with her attractiveness at the same time. Raven can see past Tilo's outward appearance and possesses a supernatural quality as well. Peppercorn, which Tilo administers, has the power to make him sweat out his secrets. After that, Raven tells Tilo his tale. He believes Tilo can assist him in revealing the hidden ability he was meant to acquire from his great-grandfather but was unable to do so. Tilo offers Geeta's grandfather kantik the thorn herb with its hair-thin black needles whose sting can be poison in an attempt to bring the family together. She suggests that he add kantik to his rice for supper and consume it gently to give him a golden tongue for an hour.

The spice that would transform Tilo into a stunning maiden is marakadwaj, which is located in the inner chamber. Eventually, Tilo transgresses the most revered law of all. The spice should be treated with extreme caution as it has the potential to cause death or insanity. Tilo gulps it down in one go. She notices changes in her physique. Returning to the store, Tilo spends some time with Raven. She builds a pyre in the middle of the space and brings spices, dals, sacs of atta and rice, and bajra. Tilo prepares to step into the fire of the Shampati. She sits in a lotus position on the spice fire after dipping her hands in turmeric. Retracing her thoughts from all she has loved, she has an unexpected sense of calm. "I speak the words that evoke the feeling, and hold up the one chili that I had left in the jar for this moment." However, nothing takes place. She tries different mantras and tears aloud. Tilo apologizes to the Spices for everything she has done. The ground shivers and shakes before her mind can process

it. Raven manages to save Tilo. Only to her does the response glide down.

In the book, various realms rich in mythology, magic, and spice-related history are portrayed. It assesses the significance of spices in the protagonist's life from a sociocultural standpoint. The novel *The Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, a writer of magic realist fiction, redefines reality as a synthesis of science and supernaturalism. Magic realism is a way of looking at the real world that includes myth, magic, and other amazing natural or experienced phenomena. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni uses her own cultural and psychological perspective to portray a world that her readers will recognize. She decides to use Magic Realism as a literary style to illustrate the issues that arise when different cultures interact. The novel is a magical realist story that blends the paranormal with commonplace occurrences. Using magic realism, the novelist bridges the gap left by the forgotten past. In this case, mythological, historical, political, and social factors are more significant.

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NATURE, SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN MERIDIAN BY ALICE WALKER THROUGH A SUBALTERN LENS

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Abstract

This research paper explores Alice Walker's Meridian through the lens of subalternity and examines how the protagonist, Meridian Hill uses Nature, spirituality, and cultural practices as essential instruments to resist the dominant power structures. This paper argues that Meridian's connection to the natural world serves as a refuge from oppression and a source of strength for her fight for justice. Furthermore, it analyses how Walker portrays Meridian's personal spirituality serves as a rejection of imposed religious structures and a way to connect it with her ancestral heritage. These elements are analyzed overall and it highlights the centrality of cultural resistance in the face of marginalization of the blacks in America. It also acknowledges the limitations of an individual's act of resistance within a larger system of oppression. This study thus demonstrates how Meridian utilizes nature, spirituality, and cultural practices to voice out the subaltern experience and challenge the dominant narratives.

Keywords: nature, spirituality, culture, resistance, subaltern etc.

Alice Walker, a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, stands as a powerful voice for the marginalized. Her work consistently explores the experiences of black Americans and their existence on the fringes of society. Her characters are often subjected to racist white culture and patriarchal black culture which seeks to silence them and through her writing she empowers this subalternity by reclaiming their narratives and forge a path towards self-discovery and liberation. As black people are silenced and marginalized, Alice Walker challenges these structures by manifesting their struggles and their power to overcome them. Several writers have depicted the struggles of African American women including Maya Angelou, Zora Neale Hurston, Gwendolyn Brooks, Phillis Wheatley, Toni Morrison etc. Walker differs from them by delving into the experiences of the blacks through her historical narratives and challenges the traditional literary perspectives through her voice as a Black American.

Her works remain as a powerful testament to the resilience of the subaltern voice. More than asserting a voice she paves the way for a more just and equitable society.

The word 'subaltern' originates from the Latin word 'subalternus' which carried a very specific military meaning. By the 18th Century, it referred to junior officers, who were often from peasant backgrounds and the ones who held positions below the captain. This historical context hints at the core of the words' meaning as a lower rank or social position. There is an interesting shift in the 19th century when writers began to use subalterns from a different perspective, the novels and the historical accounts are blended and narrated from the viewpoint of these officers. This highlighted the experiences and stories that are often missing from the dominant narratives, particularly involving military campaigns in India and America. G.R. Gleig, a 19th-century writer, exemplified this shift by

writing biographies of influential historians like Robert Clive and Warren Hastings from a subaltern perspective. Later in the 20th Century, Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci gave the subaltern a new meaning, by using it as a keyword for describing any social class subject to the dominance of another powerful class. This is also relevant in the colonial context, where colonized people were systematically under power. Subaltern Studies was spearheaded by the influential historian Ranajit Guha who is known for *A Rule of Property for Bengal* (1963). Gayatri Spivak wrote *Can the Subaltern Speak?* in 1988 which is of an opinion that the subaltern can't speak and they were resisted culturally, socially and politically. She says,

“The Subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with women as pious. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribe that she must not disown with a flourish” (308)

Spivak addresses that the powerless were fighting for their rights. She also emphasizes on the need for their voices to be heard as they were traditionally suppressed for generations. She also highlights on the double burden or consciousness faced by women of color in American society. Spivak argues that even though people without power are fighting for their rights their voices are often unheard. She criticized the way colonialism and oppression have hurt marginalized groups, especially women and people of color. She emphasized on the need to listen to the subalterns themselves but not be interpreted by others. She challenged Western dominance and argued that knowledge is not neutral but shaped by Western power structures. Spivak's work is ground breaking in postcolonial studies for several reasons. First, it critiques imperialism by questioning traditional interpretations and highlighting the ongoing struggle against colonialism. Secondly, Spivak uses ideas of deconstruction, particularly from Derrida, to analyse the power structures with Marxism and feminism. As her works are seen in different contexts, here postcolonial women are studied by Alice Walker as a

representation of a colored women and she herself writes about the subalternity that she endures as a coloured woman.

African American culture has occupied a subalternity in the American nation, however, they tried to express their voice through their cultural expressions like music, literature, visual arts, and religious practices which served as a powerful shield of resistance. These cultural forms preserved their heritage and challenged the dominant narratives. Cultural studies explore the concept of hegemony in a culture which prioritizes the white culture and marginalizes the blacks. The post-colonial era has shaped African Americans, as they were suppressed until then under the white masters.

Meridian by Alice Walker is mostly viewed through the feminist lens, autobiographical, and character analysis but this study focuses on the cultural aspect through the lens of subalternity. The article “Coming to Voice in Alice Walker's *Meridian*: Speaking out for the Revolution” by Lynn Pifer talks about the transformation of *Meridian* through her ancestry to the present through the symbols of a tree as well as the political and social aspects of the civil rights movement and its impact in the society. This talks about the black Americans and their struggle for freedom in the eyes of *Meridian*.

Farshid Nowrouzi Roshnavand, in the work “Hybrid Marginality, Intercultural Bonding and Reconstruction of Black Motherhood in Alice Walker's *Meridian*” talks about the racist white society and the sexist black society, it captures *Meridian*'s marginal hybridity as a black woman in the American Society and how she raises amidst her struggles on racism and sexism. She further focuses on the reconstruction of black motherhood in a womanist lens of Alice Walker. It also focuses on the Civil Rights Movement for which Africans were struggling in a womanist perspective.

This study differs from the other research in bringing out the Nature, spirituality, and cultural resistance of *Meridian*, it is analyzed with a cultural lens rather than a womanist or feminist lens. African American culture is deeply ingrained within the

character of Meridian Hill. Nature and spirituality are two forces that resist their culture through the character Meridian Hill.

During Meridian's stay at Saxon, she gets to know about the tree called 'The Sojourner' which was planted by a slave Louvinie who was an African American and this tree serves as a shelter for those marginalized blacks in Saxon. It was believed as a magic tree as it speaks, Louvinie's tongue was buried at the root of the tree in the Saxon plantation. Thus, nature connects with the African Americans through this tree as it stands as a center for them. This tree resists the culture of African Americans as it has a backstory of a slave from West Africa and it speaks about the stay of these blacks at Saxon.

"There was, in the center of the campus, the largest magnolia tree in the country. It was called The Sojourner. Classes were sometimes held in it; a podium and platform had been built into its lower branches, with wooden steps leading up to them. The Sojourner had been planted by a slave on the Saxon plantation later, of course, Saxon College. The slave's name was Louvinie. Louvinie was tall, thin, strong and not very pleasant to look at. She had a chin that stuck out farther than it should and she wore black head rags that made a shelf over her eyebrows. She became something of a local phenomenon in plantation society because it was believed she could not smile. In fact, throughout her long lifetime nothing even resembling a smile ever came to her poked-out lips" (Meridian 31)

These lines talk about the history of this magnificent Magnolia Tree and take its origin to the slave Louvinie of West Africa and represents the African American culture and it also talks about the storytelling culture of them by Louvinie as she was telling stories to the students, "On the Saxon plantation in America Louvinie had been placed in charge of the kitchen garden. She was considered too ugly to work in the house, and much too dour to be around the children. The children however, adored her. When pressed, she would tell them stories that made their hair stand on end." (Meridian 32) This storytelling was an element of the African American

culture. Through this form of storytelling, she inflicted her pain.

Wild Child who managed to live without anyone else was spotted by Meridian and she tried to help her but then she escaped and died. The Sojourner was also a part of the funeral at the end as it was mentioned that the chapel door was closed for the service and it happened under The Sojourner,

"They shook loose their straightened hair, and all the while they glared at the locked chapel door with a ferocity that was close to hatred. Then, as if by mutual agreement – though no words were spoken – the pallbearers picked up the casket and carried it to the middle of the campus and put down gently beneath The Sojourner, whose heavy, flower lit leaves hovered over it like the inverted peaks of a mother's half straightened kinky hair. Instead of flowers the students, as if they had planned it, quickly made wreaths from the Sojourner's fallen leaves" (Meridian 38)

This tree was so kind to the Wild Child, though everybody ignored her, "The Sojourner herself, ever generous to her children, dropped a leaf on the chest of The Wild Child" (Meridian 38). Thus, nature here serves as a healer to the abandoned ones. This language of nature attributes its communication not through words but through deeds.

Spirituality is yet another cultural implication in the novel, as it has connections with Christianity, Nature and Meridian's ancestry. "Spirituality is that most human of experiences that seeks to transcend self and find meaning and purpose through connection with others, nature and/or a Supreme Being, which may or may not involve religious structures or traditions" (Buck 289–290). Here, spirituality is a personal experience that differs from each being to connect themselves and find meaning in this world. Meridian found spirituality in music as she has talked about how much she disliked church and her form of spirituality raises through the music and not these sermons in churches. She felt solace only with the music and glass windows rather than her belief in Christianity. She herself addresses that, "Meridian sat thinking of how much she had

disliked church. Whenever she was in a church, she felt claustrophobic, as if the walls were closing in. She had, even as a child, felt pity for the people who sat through the long and boring sermons listlessly fanning in the summer heat and hoping, vainly she felt, for the best. The music she loved. Next to the music, she had liked only the stained-glass windows, when there were any, because the colored glass changed the ordinary light into something richer of gold and rose and mauve. It was restful and beautiful and inspired the reverence the sermons had failed to rouse" (Meridian 217-218)

Meridian has talked about the Sacred Serpent Mound and her attachment towards nature in her childhood which is now a tourist attraction and blacks are restricted to enter into it. She talks about the past where she was happy to do farming along with her father and how she enjoyed finding happiness rather than her brothers who found happiness with cars and industries. Nature is spiritual as she finds happiness with it. "Each afternoon after school her father had gone out to the farm. It was a beautiful land made more impressive by the five-hundred-yard sacred serpent that formed a curving, twisting hill beyond the corn... Meridian had always enjoyed being on the farm with him, though they rarely talked. Her brothers were not interested in farming" (Meridian 50). She felt bad about the loss of the land. Meridian also talks about Feather Mae's story who worshipped the sun alone as she thought that all religion wouldn't give the physical ecstasy.

In conclusion, the Nature and Spirituality of Meridian has been a cultural resistance for the African Americans, as it has talked about the culture of the Africans and their history through the Magnolia tree and the slave Louvinie from West Africa and it also talks about the Sacred Serpent Mound through which Meridian found solace once and how it too depicts the history and culture of the Africans. This enduring Magnolia tree and the sacred serpent mound serve as a powerful testament to the

resilience of Meridian's cultural heritage. Meridian's solace in the serpent mound, a place of joy for her father's presence, underscores the importance of cultural memory and resistance. These are certain symbols that voice the subaltern which remains as a resistance to Meridian's Cultural heritage.

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RATAN RATHOR'S CONFLICT OF HIS DUAL MENTAL STRESS ARUN JOSHI'S THE APPRENTICE

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Abstract

Arun Joshi is one of the most well-known writers among the youthful Indo -Anglican novelists. His place in the specialization of Indian English literature during the post-independence era is definite. Joshi came into the fame with his very first novel *The Foreigner* which contributes in 1968. He immediately clutches the attention of readers as well as critics by his new thematic concerns in the genre of fiction. Unlike his forerunner he neither writes fiction for entertainment nor for any social or political indoctrination. He evaluation with the intermediate of novel writing, for studying the modern man's predicament, particularly the motives responsible for his actions, and the effect of these actions on his psyche. Arun Joshi himself interpreted that, "My novels are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and of myself" (qtd. in Dhawan, 18). Joshi probes deep into the psyche of the protagonist and outmoded their mental hustle and anxiety. Rapt between the Indian education and Western influences, his protagonist suffers from wicked materialistic delusion which leads to root out, suspicion, loss of trust, and an identity crisis. Joshi's protagonists are modern men of this world who are lost in a society of mixed ideals. His heroes, who rather turn anti-heroes due to this confused idealism, are running a fruitless expedition. They are struggling to sustain their faith in a world which stands in opposition to them. They are unable to hold on their identity in such a world of moral confusion. So either they revolt with the society or completely yield to it. In both cases there comes out of self- alienation. If the character uprising he is alienated from the society, and if he capitulates, he in turn gets alienated from his own 'real' self identity. The result initially is restiveness and finally a self-exploration and self-introspection.

Keywords: idealism, pragmatism, patriotism, absurdity

Introduction

Joshi wrote five novels include *The Apprentice*. His unfortunate death in 1993 brought an end to his literary career. Three of Joshi's novels *The Foreigner* (1968), *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), and *The Apprentice* (1974) were published before 1980. Then he won Sahitya Akademi Award for the novel *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) and finally the last *The City and the River* (1990). The major themes that run through all of Joshi's novels are the themes of alienation and involvement, East-West encounter and compromise, love and hate, quest and complacency, and existentialism and materialism (Kumar, 18).

There are a number of literary way that have come into the making of Arun Joshi- a modern era novelist. A marked influence of the existentialist thinkers was very apparent on Joshi and his novels. He was very much enthused by Camus, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Kafka, Beckett and others. As a result

Joshi's protagonists are the contemporary modern men, who are in a constant quest for a way of life that would help them to face the existential identity problem of this world. This 'crisis of character' or the crisis of existence has been portrayed in all his five novels. All his protagonists are restlessly searching for their roots as well as trying to attain a rational understanding of the purpose of their existence in this universe. Thus, his protagonists are, habitually 'seekers'. They make a drive from delusion to reality.

Ratan's Father Idealism

Joshi's third novel *The Apprentice*, like his earlier two novels, explores the inner recesses of a character that is frayed between two conflicting philosophies – the 'life' and the 'living'. 'Life' connotes the idealism, patriotism, and realism skilled by Ratan Rathor's father, a freedom fighter and a martyr.

The 'Living' connotes the continued existence impulse in a world which is full of confusion, corruption, hypocrisy, and absurdity – where 'Money' is the supreme ruling power. Ratan Rathor, the protagonist of the novel, is a child of double legacy. On one hand is his father's idealism which teaches him to be a complete devotee for the general good of his country and his fellow people. His father gives up his rewarding profession of a lawyer in order to serve his country and fight for its independence. To pursue a profession for personal benefits is termed by his father as "Bourgeois filth" (Joshi, 32). But, ironically, on the other hand stands his mother's pragmatic worldly view. Rathor remembers her advice:

Don't fool yourself, son, she said. . . .

It was not patriotism but money, she said, that brought respect and bought security. Money made friends. Money succeeded where all else failed. There were many laws, she said, but money was law unto itself. (Joshi 19)

Such conflicting ideals led to the crisis in his character. He never in his life felt capable of distinguish between the right and the wrong. He became a man of 'dual' personality, where he thought in one way and acted in the other. There remained no synchronisation between his deliberations and exploit. So thus, he felt incapable and he self- alienated from his circumstance. Tapan Ghosh observes in this context: Crisis in the soul of an individual, who is entangled in the mess of contemporary life with its confusion of values and moral anarchy and his untiring quest for a remedy lie at the core of Arun Joshi's exploration of human reality in *The Apprentice*. (Ghosh, 90)

Ratan Immersed in Materialistic Pool

At first when he comes to Delhi, a land of probability, he is full of anticipate and hopefulness. His pastoral innocence reminds us of the men who came to America, decoy by the 'American Dream' of being triumphant and famous. Similarly, Ratan Rathor arrives in Delhi with a desire to earn a name and flourishing future for himself. He says, "And I had no doubt that . . . I should make a mark on the

world, a mark as visible and striking as my father's" (Joshi 23). As long as Ratan followed his father's idealism he retained his moral core – he had a 'life' within him. But the cut-throat competition and a corrupt and materialistic society tested his ethics and patience at each and every step. He undergoes a humiliating experience while searching for a job, and is rejected and jeered at every interview. He realised that, "the jobs would be filled by people who had, in some manner, been pre-selected" (Joshi 29).

Endangered by a bleak future, without influential connections, Ratan undergoes a profound change. As a significant he wholly succumbs to the sham standards of his society. He learns to keep up manifestation by clearance even ordinary civility and friendship although it was not his 'real' self. He was forced and pressurized by the society itself. Thus, he was constantly aware of his hypocrisy. He portrays his own deviation from the correct path and says:

. . . I did not need the money. I am quite sure of that. I needed it no more than sitting here, after two cups of tea, I need a third. I may drink it because others do, or because it is offered free, but I need it neither for survival nor happiness. (Joshi 58)

He realizes, during his declaration of guilt that corruption had become a natural part of his existence. It was as natural to him as breathing-done throughout the day, without bountiful it a second thought. Ratan finds himself entirely vanished in this atmosphere. For the sake of job defense and promotion, he even agrees to marry his boss' niece. At that time he doesn't had interest to plans of marriage, but still he agrees because he gets an assurance from his superintendent that he would never become jobless. More than the proposal of marriage, he was fulfilled by this declaration. Progressively, he grasp that the world runs on 'deals'. In fact his marriage too was a contract for his career.

If men forgot how to make deals the world would come to a stop It is not the atom or the sun or God or sex that lies at the heart of the universe: it is DEALS They are simply there, like air. (Joshi 48)

So he becomes well-settled in life and get pleasure from all the material comforts, still there is no fulfillment at heart. Disapproval had become a path of life for Ratan. He feels that there is something that he still be short of due to which he is not content. In order to fill that insufficiency in life he goes to every extent of offensiveness He starts taking attention in women, visits prostitutes, drunk alcohol, and all other dishonest acts. But still he is not satisfied. With the advent of 'financial' power, his 'life' becomes more tedious and dead. Ratan is 'living' without 'life'. However, he is shaken off this ethical and spiritual apathy by the death of his brother-like close friend, the Brigadier. Rathor comes to know that the bribe he took for clearing the contract of faulty weapons, had directly affected the Brigadier's life. The Brigadier had to desert his post during the Indo-China war because he was abounding with defective weapons. As a result he couldn't fight and had to withdraw. Due to this abandonment, he was going to face a court-martial. The Brigadier became psychologically disturbed by such social discomfiture and had a nervous breakdown. At last he committed suicide. This event makes Rathor look back at his life and his actions. He is ashamed of himself and feels at fault for the Brigadier's death. It is then, that he realizes the extent of his degradation. He saw:

. . . the vision of the vast pit at the bottom of which my [his] life crawled. Like a worm. And, now, this vision trailed me wherever I went . . . I felt a fear . . . that I was going mad. . . . There is no fear like the fear of madness. . . . Those who descend into madness descend alone. Immobilised, fuddled, tongueless, misunderstood, laughed at. Thus I sank. Like a stone. (Joshi 124)

Ratan Psyche toward His Father's Image

Arun Joshi give the impression to be largely influenced by Albert Camus' *The Fall* (1956), which is an intense dramatic monologue of an ethically downtrodden character. *The Apprentice* is also narrated in a confessional tone. Rathor uses this mode to express his quandary and the social reality. In a retrospective style, he narrates his journey from

innocence to experience. Rathor makes an truthful confession, without hiding or planning any detail that would reflect his hypocrisy, treachery, debauchery and finally degeneration. Rathor recount his life-story to a young college student from the hilly areas of Punjab. Rathor hadn't plead guilty to anybody else earlier, but he feels an preference to narrate everything to this boy. He says that the young boy reminds him of his father who was similarly "grave and clear-eyed" (Joshi, 7). Ratan's father's sacrifice had made an indelible impression on Ratan's psyche. So it seems that he is making his honest confession, actually, to his father's image; his father being the only essence of sincerity and selflessness, in his life (Sharma 58-59).

When after the death of his friend, Ratan realizes his great unfaithfulness he seeks repentance. Initially he blames the Sheikh for all this chaos, because he was the one who brought the offer to Ratan. But when Ratan confronts the Sheikh or Himmat Singh, he realizes that one cannot always accuse others for one's mistake. He realizes that the culprit could be found nowhere but in one's own self. The real offender lies within us, who very easily gets enchanted with shams and the affectedness of this materialistic world. Ratan realizes that one could not reform the world, but oneself. Earlier he used to think that life is like a 'zero'. A man could not take anything from a zero. But now he understood that "you can take things out of a zero! You can make it negative" (Joshi 142). So it is better to let it be a zero rather than making it 'negative. And "it becomes negative when you take out of it your sense of shame, your honour" (Joshi 142). It is generally believed that Joshi was influenced by the European existentialist philosophers. But in *The Apprentice* we comprehend that Joshi was equally influenced by the Gandhian philosophy of social service as well as the *karmic* principles of *Bhagvad Gita*.

Ratan –The Truth path

According to Gandhi, the greatest religion of man was to put oneself to selfless service which only suffering and sacrifice can make possible. (Sharma 75)

Thus Ratan Rathor, letting the world live its tainted standards, goes to the temple every morning, before office, and does the selfless service of wiping the shoes of the congregation. And he keeps on reminding himself of being good, being decent, and being of some 'use' to others. He remembers his father's words which laid prominence on the 'karma' of a man: "whatever you do touches someone somewhere" (Joshi 143). This way he reaffirms his trust in 'life' and seeks to get his heart rid of the 'bourgeois filth'.

While Ratan narrates his story to the young student, one comes to comprehend that Ratan's life was, obviously' a conflict of 'life' and 'living'. From his childhood itself he was broken by this conflict. He was fascinated towards both poles. 'Life' was symbolized by his father while his mother was a sign of 'Living'. It becomes obvious that a child brought up in such an atmosphere of conflict, would later turn out to be a puzzled personality. He wants both, but is able to justify none. When he is idealist he is famished to death. He distinguishes through the harsh reality of life where money, power, links and deals were the ruling factors. So he chooses for such a life. But when he becomes practical, he loses gratification. All the material console that an ordinary man craves for, prove to be incompetent in appeasing him. Though he takes bribe and lives an self-indulgence life, but somewhere in heart he is always shamefaced. And that's why he always tries to justify his karmic sactions.

If I had taken a bribe I belonged rather to the rule than the exception A bribe could get you a bed in a hospital, a place to burn your dead For a sum of money politicians changed sides. For a larger sum they declared wars. . . . And now if I had happened to have accidentally indulged in a little slip-up, the sky was not going to fall. (Joshi 109)

Conclusion

There was always a "little squeaky voice" which tried to guide Rathor to the true path (Joshi 115). This 'inner soul guilty cry' was none other than the inner conscience of Rathor which always refuse to accept the wrong and insincere path. But Rathor had gradually 'hardened' and become 'a man of this world' – tame, egotistic, and crooked and so he twisted a deaf ear to this voice. It is towards the end when he recognized his mistake and seeks repentance, that he acknowledges the essence of his individual existence. He comprehend that life cannot be lived on extremes, i.e. completely idealist or completely practical. One needs to find a balance, a middle path – the golden path – that makes 'life' possible. Though making a 'living' is equally important, but that cannot be carried out by putting at stake one's reputation, his virtues, and his conscience. A man can be determined money-minded and even selfish but he should not be a 'lifeless soul'. To continue to exist a equilibrium should be reached between 'life' and 'living', else life becomes a complete 'waste'.

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PARENTAL ABANDONMENT LEADING TO INSECURE ATTACHMENTS IN ANNE TYLER'S *DINNER AT THE HOMESICK RESTAURANT*

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Abstract

Anne Tyler is a renowned author known for her unique writing style, particularly in her iconic novel Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant. Her work explores themes of family, home, and identity, with a focus on the evolution of family relationships between mother and child, siblings, and beyond. This paper aims to study the psychological impact of abandonment and neglect on children's personalities and adulthood. Pearl Tull's agony because of her husband's abandonment forces her to guard her children from the world's malevolence. The children are depicted as ones who are always in need of protection and support in the absence of the father. Then, Cody's observations and his question of his father's absence and his feelings that stimulate an action in Cody is analyzed. It also examines how Tyler effectively portrays the psychological difficulties that follow abandonment, such as disturbed attachment styles, trust issues, diminished social skills, and difficulty in understanding social interactions.

Keywords: self-fulfillment, dysfunctional, parental abandonment, maternal duty, interpersonal trauma, psychological issues

Introduction

In any society, the family is the basic social unit which endows the family relationship with poise in sexual, emotional, intellectual and social way as none other can. From the primordial times to the present day, family has sustained its significance in its role of a key and essential unit of the social set up. During the last three decades, the United States has seen a major family transformation. The significant changes that have occurred, for example is that the divorce rate has increased, mothers decided to give up marriage which resulted in a large number of children being raised in single-parent house holds. Many families moved away from childcare to the psychological well-being and self-development of their adult members. This is witnessed in the increasing break up between parents when the marriage relationship doesn't meet their psychological and self-fulfillment needs even though they have young children to bring up.

Anne Tyler is a creative contemporary American author whose work *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* explores into the dynamics of family life

that brings out the southern theme of a dysfunctional family and the hunt for the self, the craving for shelter and a sense of home. The author uses family problems as a central theme in her characters' lives, strategically placing them in familial relationships to reveal their influences, motives and effects, particularly the issue of parental abandonment, which is a key family problem.

In general, "abandonment" in the family structure is a relationship that occurs when an adult willingly denies a role that someone expects him/her to fulfill, like parental or maternal obligations. Children require both parents for guidance, protection and love. They not only need to feel sheltered physically, but also emotionally and spiritually.

Tyler shows the mother, Pearl Tull's agony because of her husband's inexplicable abandonment of the family, which forces her to guard her children from the world's malevolence. The children are depicted as ones who are always in need of protection and support in the absence of the father by which they are emotionally hurt and for this cause the atmosphere of the home becomes depressed and

bewildered. Tyler's pragmatic depiction of Pearl Tull's family life makes it apparent that, for her and for the reader the axis of the mind and the goodwill of the soul are ingrained in the domestic origins of the individual.

In general, young children grow up in a milieu of relationships. "Early experiences, especially emotionally or affectively charged experiences with other human beings, induce and organize the patterns of structural growth that result in the expanding functional capacities of a developing individual" (Malekpour 81). Here, we find that the theory of attachment has made significant contributions to the idea of early experience.

Based on the attachment theory, we can see how the absence of the escaped father in *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* makes life hard for the children. When we analyze the character of the eldest son Cody Tull, various forceful questions concerning the early psychological development and its consequences that arise later on can be seen.

Attachment theory was first promulgated by the British psychologist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby who termed it as a 'lasting psychological connectedness between human beings' (1988). He felt that children had the desire to develop a safe attachment with their main care-giver in their premature years. Attachment can be secure and insecure attachments. Sheltered connections sustain mental processes which facilitate the child to regulate emotions, diminish fear, adjust with others and have self understanding and insight. On the other hand, attachments that are insecure can have adverse consequences. If a child is not able to rely on an adult to respond to his/her needs in times of stress, then, he/she is unable to learn how to appease themselves, handle their emotions and engage in mutual relationships. Among the factors that may pose a peril to the worth of bonding between a child and a parent is the spotlight to abandon, conjugal violence or other forms of abuse and abandonment.

Accordingly, this paper tries to bring out the parental abandonment as a source of insecure attachments which results in belligerence, social

maladjustment, affectionless psychopathy and hopelessness.

Discussion

Relationships that exist in a family portrayed by Tyler are characteristically upsetting and therefore, become the basis of frustration and loneliness for her characters. In *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, the action starts from the moment when the 85-year-old Pearl Tull is dying, bringing back memories of her marriage and her children's maturity, and then moving to her funeral when her runaway husband, Beck appears on that day. The action moves from her point of view to that of each of her children, chapter by chapter, ending with her funeral.

Beck's abrupt abandonment is known by psychologists as "actual desertion" in which the absconding associate leaves the relationship, taking his/her belongings and going into another home never to return. On the other hand, the abandoned partner who is Pearl Tull does not agree to end the marriage and at the same time does not have the chance to save the marriage. As an individual, who is tasked with raising three children and is compelled to become the primary caregiver, develops a rigid, catastrophic family structure. She is bereft of friends, does not call on the customers at the store where she works, does not even encourage her children to bring friends to their home. Pearl's decision not to inform her children about Beck's departure is driven by her desire to protect them and her desire to maintain her deeply ingrained role in her personality, fearing that disclosing the news will lead to their disapproval and a sense of isolation. Moreover, she sees it as her maternal duty to guard the children from the pain she takes on and they will also experience the same if they discover the truth about their father's absence.

Trying to deal with her own sting of abandonment, she is sometimes unable to control her frustration and would snap, going into tears. Although she loves her children, at moments of fury, she would blow out at them with physical, verbal and emotional abuse. On the day of her funeral, Ezra's brother Cody describes Pearl as a "raving, shrieking, unpredictable witch":

"She slammed us against the wall and called us scum and vipers, said she wished us dead, shook us till our teeth rattled, screamed in our faces. We never knew from one day to the next, was she all right? Was she not? The tiniest thing could set her off. 'I'm going to throw you through that window,' she used to tell me. 'I'll look out that window and laugh at your brains splashed all over the pavement.'" (294)

Beck's desertion leaves Pearl feeling insecure as a mother, as she often feels inadequate to care for the children, because she must fulfill both the parental roles. Pearl's insecurity is evident in her multiple instances of expressing this feeling. She is a strong and resilient individual who entrusts herself with the protection of the children, despite her own frustrations and helplessness, despite the recurrent attacks on them. This affects the deserted mother which therefore pains her attitude towards her children and their memories of childhood.

Cody is the central consciousness in the story. His observations are acute and he is the one who suffers a critical change at the end. Pearl doesn't understand Cody's furious question about his father's absence and her preference towards his younger brother Ezra, nor does she recognize Cody's awareness of her feelings towards him. These two worries stimulate an action in Cody that Pearl considers complicated and mean. In spite of being handsome, dark-haired, Cody is considered a hero as well as a villain. Cody suffers the most from his father's abandonment, his mother's verbal and physical abuse and her preference for his brother Ezra. Obsessively jealous, he is a naughty and a troublemaking child. He derides, resents Ezra and is always jealous of him. Cody, driven by a desire to win Pearl's affection, makes efforts to alter his mother's negative perception of him by projecting Ezra in a negative light. To some extent, Beck is indirectly responsible for Pearl's treatment of the children after his abandonment as well as the behavior of Cody. His experience of his father's leaving is described as:

One weekend their father didn't come home, and he didn't come the next weekend either, or the next.

Or rather, one morning Cody woke up and saw that it had been a while since their father was around. Cody observed his mother's distracted expression and hand gestures, unable to recall his father's recent time with them. He tried to find a scene to explain Beck's departure but only came up with general scenes, such as quarrels, spilled milk, and driving in the country where his father lost the way and his mother yelled at him. (40).

This account shows how the absence of communication about the father's sudden departure created which psychologists call "interpersonal trauma". Bowlby (1973) attributed childhood abuse and neglect to interpersonal trauma, which often resulted in dysfunctional attachment styles. This interpersonal experience is associated with an ambivalent, avoidant, or disorganized attachment style, which is considered dysfunctional in nature. (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Main & Solomon, 1990) Cody is the only child of his siblings to distinctly remember his father's abandonment. Starting from the moment Cody realizes the truth about Beck, he claims all the guilt for this disappearance. He experiences dreams where he is "not his present self [but instead] he has somehow slid backward and has become a toddler again" (47). In his dreams, he becomes "conscious of a desperate need to learn to manage, to take charge of his surroundings" and then imagines himself posturing in front of his father to prove that he can make it on his own without Beck's presence in his life (47). In other words, Cody yearns for appreciation from his absent father and wishes he can tell him "Look at what I've accomplished"... "Notice where I've got to, how far I've come without you" (48). This shows how children who grow up without their fathers, their behavior is more likely to be associated with dejection and low self-esteem. Cody is tormented with an obscure sense of guilt that he is to be blamed for his father's sudden desertion. "Was it something I said, something I did that made my father go away? (47). One can detect that Cody is not the reason his father's departure, but because he does not voice his feelings, no one in the family understands the extent of his guilt and inner suffering.

When he tackles his mother about his father's absence, she says that she does not believe that he is "getting so big". This comment adds burdens of fear from the implications of the responsibility placed on him by his mother's statement, trying to prove that he's "only" fourteen. He resists his mother's efforts to depend on him. Psychological disorders related to the absence of the father are obvious in Cody's attitude, for example, attention-deficit, hyperactivity disorder, memory disturbance, diminished social skills, personality disorders, anxiety disorders and depressive disorders.

As regards his relationship with his mother, Cody is the most disturbed soul of his siblings. He remembers "that she'd never shown the faintest interest in her community but dwelt in it like a visitor from a superior neighborhood... keeping her door shut tightly when at home." (284). He once compares his mother to the mothers of his friends and is resentful that she has had no personal friendships: "Look at his two best friends: their parents went to the movies together; their mothers talked on the telephone" (285). This shows how Cody longs to see his mother acting like other mothers. He wants his mother to have "some outside connection beyond that suffocating house" (59). He yearns to see her gossiping with a little group of women in the kitchen, allowing them to roll her hair in pin curls, trading beauty secrets, playing cards" (60). He feels both as an outsider because of his mother's continual abuse and never feels "at home" because of his father's absence.

Then, Cody's jealousy towards his brother Ezra culminates in his marriage to the one woman Ezra ever loved, Ruth Spivey. As soon as Cody gets married to Ruth, he moves away from the house because he clearly wants to avoid his mother. The protagonist's desire to escape his past stems from his heightened sensitivity to his childhood, focusing on the negative experiences and holding his mother accountable for causing these struggles.

Towards the end of the novel, after Pearl's funeral, Cody raises many questions to his father

summing up the harm, the anger and the injuries of his father abandonment:

How could you do that? ... How could you just dump us on our mother's mercy? ... We were kids, we were only kids, we had no way of protecting ourselves. We looked to you for help. We listened for your step at the door so we'd be safe, but you just turned your back on us. You didn't lift a finger to defend us. (300)

Conclusion

In short, fathers significantly influence children's progress and health, while fatherless families often result in lone mothers who are more susceptible to stress, depression, and other emotional and psychological issues. In *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, Cody's anger and resentment to a great extent is attributed to what psychoanalyst's term "father hunger". Studies reveal that abandonment can cause severe emotional trauma, impacting an individual's psychological functioning and future responses to rejection, loss, or disconnection. This is clearly evident in Cody's case. Thus, he is driven from his early youth by a rage to dominate; he is endlessly cruel not only to his brother, Ezra from whom he steals his girl, but to his own wife and son. Tyler's novel is beautifully crafted. Her unusual and enthralling characters are so powerfully real, so carefully developed, they come to life both for her as a writer and for the reader, who suddenly can see a bit of his own mother, father, brother or even oneself in their touching words, their unspoken impulses, their blunders and their moments of weakness. She locates her novel in a tradition of fiction which probes the psychological dynamics of a family and goes beneath the surface pieties to the underlying mysteries. Her novel with its insightful illustration of the dysfunction in the twentieth-century American family has made a great contribution in understanding the major issues concerning the daily lives in the modern American society.

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THE PLURALITY OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN VIKAS SWARUP'S *SIX SUSPECTS*

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Abstract

Vikas Swarup, the contemporary Indian novelist penetrates the upward social mobility through the window of globalization. Six Suspects is a novel reflecting social problems prevail in all over India in the form of corruption, women degradation, oppression of youth, etc., The development of cosmopolitanism in India resulted in a significant hindrance of culture. Money and power plays vital role in building character and culture in the liberalized India. Indian youths focused only on money for their betterment of life. They earn money for comfort and pleasure. There is no happiness and contentment in their modern survival. More over, Indian youths never bothered about using alcohol, which pulls down their growth in character, culture and career. There is a regression in India's progress because of hypocrite personality . The main causes of an individual declination are picturized in the novel of Vikas Swarup's Six Suspects. This paper endeavors to analyse the unique identities in the present scenario of India.

Keywords: *characterization, absurdity, juxtaposition, poetic justice*

Vikas Swarup *Six Suspects* is a novel with suspense of the murderer of Vicky Rai, a son of the Home minister of Uttar Pradesh and old owner of Rai group of Industries. The protagonist is a symbol of social problem of current India. He is “silenced “and “absentied” anti-protagonist . This novel opens with the crimes that occurred in India. Williamson Dave has reviewed the novel thus:

Swarup divulges that a young industry mogul named Vicky Rai has been murdered. The deed was done at a large party hosted by Vicky himself to celebrate his being cleared of killing a female bartender named Ruby Gill. The police have identified six suspects. Swarup devotes the next 400 pages to the individual stories of how each of the six became implicated. What pulls the reader through the novel is wondering how such a disparate group could have ended up at Vicky's place and why they wanted to kill him. Part of the fun lies in Swarup's using a different narrative style for each story. Also, Vicky is such a nasty fellow, just about anybody wouldn't mind seeing him dead. (June 21, 2009)

At his teenage, Vicky collided his Swanky BMW over six homeless people while driving at night. They were sleeping in the pavement. There was no witness and the family members of deceased were bribed. In his twenty years, he shot two black bucks at wild life sanctuary for fun. The only eye witness is Kishore, the forest ranger, died in mysterious circumstances. Vicky's acquittal piles up as he got release from all his cases. His father's high position saves him by changing their testimonies. The social status of his family hides his crimes.

While celebrating his 25 th birthday with celebrities Vicky again shot a doctoral girl Ruby Gill for not providing him a drink. The novel is against the rich and powerful. In India, Each and every citizen is important for the growth and development of Individual and social lives. Rich and powerful men are becoming atrocities of accident, murder and corruption, while on the other hand the poor are their targets.

The plot is clearly structured with an unlikely group of six disparate individuals: The Bureaucrat,

The Actress, The Tribal, The Thief, The Politician and the American. Their lives are interlinked with the sufferings that emerged by Vicky and they had an intention to take revenge eventually. The motive of eradicating social crime is converged at the same place at the same time. Swarup stirred the minds of the readers with the suspense by six suspects of the murderer of Vicky Rai. When Vicky hosts a huge party to celebrate his acquittal, the lights go off and he was shot dead. The novel is developed to trace out murderer of Vicky Rai. Vicky's death unveils his crime .

Not all deaths are equal. There's a caste system even in murder. The stabbing of an impoverished rickshaw puller is nothing more than a statistic, buried inside the pages of the news paper. But the murder of a celebrity instantly becomes headline news. Because the rich and famous rarely get murdered. (SS, 1)

Through the introductory line of the novel, Swarup unravels the mystery of the murder. It is to be noted that in course of Vicky's life time, he concealed his crime. But the fact of his own crime revealed in his death.

Family in India is the frame work of love, kindness, humanity, culture and discipline. We live with our parents to imbibe these attributes. Being Politician, Vicky's father failed to imbibe these qualities to his son. The sophisticated life spoils the life of the youth. Alcohol addiction is prominent among the youth, which paved the way for many crimes. In olden days, Drinking was a sin, but in globalization era, it has become a fashion. It is considered to be the symbol of prosperity and prestige.

The novel hinges around six characters in different perspectives. The importance of cultural shades is neglected in the modern atmosphere. The covetous sense of freedom and emancipation tend to grow loose morals in the contemporary India. The six Characters in this story revolve around the social upheavals of modern India. First and foremost character is Mohan Kumar, the bureaucrat, belongs to Rai Group of Industries signifies emptiness.

His Mistress Rita always nags for gold and diamonds. He craves for respectable position which made him to meet Baba Aghori, renowned psychic who possess the power of divine energy through yoga. Suddenly Mohan Kumar swallowed some foreign bodies which made uncomfortable and unconscious. When the police man waked him up he says *'I told you. I am Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.'*The police arrested him for his dodging.

Swarup uses the face shift technique in the character Mohan Kumar. He tries to enact as Gandhiji spirit dominates him.

He discards his mobile phone, stops going to the office completely and spends his time reading Gita and other religious books and writing letters to the news paper on issues such as corruption and immortality, but which are never published because he signs them 'Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi' (SS, 96)

By the way he tries to collect each and every piece of information on the Ruby Gill murder case, which he pastes diligently in to a scrap book. This clearly shows that he intends to pretend to earn fame and escape from the inquiry of Ruby Gill murder case thereby he shows off as if he had forgotten his evil qualities of past. In the chapter *Restoration* Mohan Kumar meets Vicky Rai with the cold metal of pistol, While Vicky Rai was enjoying the birthday party indulging in drinking and feels pleasure with girls. In this juncture Jiba Korwa from Jharkhand , encountered him in the form of a snake . The Tribal treats him for the eighteen thousand rupees and tells that he would remove the spirit, Mohan Kumar exclaimed:

Mohan presses his temples and finds that the pain has gone. He feels cleansed, whole. He sits up and begins putting on his clothes. 'You have done something which no one else could do. That spirit was causing me a lot of trouble, even though it was that of a very famous man'.

'Man?'

'Yes, The spirit which possessed me was that of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Surely you have heard of Mahatma Gandhi?'

No, you are mistaken. It was not a man who possessed you, it was a woman.'

'Woman? How do you know?'

'I talked to it. It was very stubborn.'

'What was her name?'

'Ruby Gill'(SS, 404)

Swarup picturizes the supernatural scenes held in the Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi. The supernatural element is still believed by the innocent audiences. To visualize Aghori's Baba meditation huge crowds had been gathered. Supernatural element is captured in cinematography, Mohan Kumar aiming for hypnotic the mass by speaking in the voice of Gandhi. and converted it for commercial by selling the tickets. The commotion broke out, when Mohan Kumar is shot by the protestor. Vikas Swarup fascinate the readers:

Amid the Intrigues and countr-intrigues, the tensions and divisions, the unending conflicts among all these groups, the spirit of Gandhi makes its entry like a hurricane, a tempest that turns everything upside down and escalates the tension only to resolve everything in the end. We are shown how the Gandhian approach resolves the conflict in human life at varied levels- in personal life, in civil society, in business and industry, in law and order and criminal justice systems and finally at the level of the nation-state and its machinery. (Valiyamattam,7)

Shabnam Saxena is one of India's popular actresses. She is well-known for Beauty and eloquent. Vicky Rai adept her and put an agreement. She was fully kept under control of Vicky Rai.. She narrates her story through her personal diary. She falls victim to a double-cross. Shabnamji who is returning from London felt delicacy to meet the public. The actors in India are celebrities when they move among public. She was troubled by drunkard, Sohrab, a little boy suffering from chronic leukaemia and his mother Mrs. Daruwala. They were excited to meet Shabnamji. They feel proud to meet such celebrities. Then, Shabnam mentioned about her experience as a chief guest on a function to honour the memory of Meenakumari, *The Tragedy Queen*. Swarup is very

keen to notify the actress pride and prejudice regarding their beauty.

Swarup predicted the secrets of characters in India and intends to present their hypocrisy in the novel *Six Suspects*. Munna Mobile, a lower-class young man who possess an artistic technique of stealing cellphones out of cars; That out raged him to step in with a revolver in one hand and bottle in the other. He escaped from the spot running like an Olympiad champion. This character confesses the truth to his own conscience that he took his servant job for the purpose of fascinating Bhusiya women and to earn his livelihood honestly. Back to pavilion, He again thought of becoming high- flying mobile phone thief and states that:

I have kept a record of each and every mobile phone we stole over a three- year period. The total came to Ninety- nine. It was good while it lasted. It gave me enough to live a modest life, buy a few decent clothes, have flings with a couple of girls from the locality. The funny thing is, I didn't have to sell the girls any fake story about my being a medical rep or some shit like that. They got their thrills from hearing about my exploits as a mobile – phone thief.(SS,57)

Fortunately, He was instructed through a phone to pick –up a briefcase. It contained more money. On seeing money, He gains hope to be settled in life. one such theft leads him to a briefcase full of money. He falls in love with a mysterious young woman who turns out to be Vicky's sister Ritu.

The American Larry Page visits India to marry an actor, Sapna Singh. She is the most beautiful girl in the whole wide world. He visits India in disguise of Rick Myers who is the head of the Google. He poms himself and attended Vicky's party to protect Sapnam from the threatening trap. He had a great expectation in marrying a young actress corresponding with. Larry. He had reprehension regarding the roads in India.

In India, the survival of the tribal considered to be homeless, living together in the shack, with irrational concepts. Their social unit has unique religious faith, values and customs. In the chapter"

Tribal” Melame and Pemba attending funeral of Talai and by the side, they are playing foot ball. It seems there is a loss of life periodically in their tribal legions. It ‘s a great mystery and they are curious to save death .They together intended to protect their social group from extinct. In this venture, Nokai the elderly man of their tribal suggested Melame and Eketi to recover stolen rock, so that the whole tribal would get out from the sin of the death. Eketi ventured to Delhi hoping to bring back life for tribal community. Eketi Onge, a rather primitive young man sent to India by an island tribe anxious to recover a sacred stone that had been stolen from his people. In this venture, he falls in love for Munna’s blind sister.

The Politician is a Home minister Jagannath Rai, wants to get rid of testifying himself against the murder of Mustaqueem. He finds the way to escape from that guilt.. At this moment, Chief Minister calls him to be beware of his son Vicky’s involvement in the Ruby Gill murder case. He neglects by uttering:” Then why are you making such a big issue over my son’s involvement in just one murder case, when the judgement has not even been delivered?”(SS,71). Swarup exposes the trauma of the politician of India, neglecting to render his duty to the society, besides he makes use of his power to commit crimes.

Swarup describes the life style of these characters and their absurdity who repels to life. There is constant investigation process to identify the characters. Swarup took intelligent effort to connect the characters to the particular place for the same motive. All the characters are oriented around a center of place. In the book *The Role of Place in Literature* , the centre of place is notified :“ to orient himself to the world man seems to require a sense of the deployment of persons, things, and places around a center, and this center thus acquires paramount importance over all around it” and this “centrality”. (Lutwack, 45)

The six characters ventured to Vicky Rai’s farm house to number six which they had the motive of taking revenge against Vicky Rai. Here Swarup drew the pattern of Vicky Rai as the cause and effect of the

lust for Money ,woman and land. Arun Advani, an investigative journalist witnessed human greed, malice and depravity in India and multinationals. He tracked the life of Vicky Rai for over a decade inspite of many death threats and warnings. Swarup sculpts the character Vicky Rai as rich and powerful who took law in his hands . He also finds loop hole in the case of mowing down six homeless vagrants who were sleeping on the pavement at a very young age. He was charged with hunting and killing two black bucks in a wild life sanctuary in Rajasthan. The only eye witness Kishore the forest Ranger died in mysterious circumstances. He murdered Ruby Gill, who refused to provide drink but the case was closed and Vicky Rai was released. In order to celebrate the verdict he threw a party at his Mehrauli farm house.

The poetic justice dragged him to meet his end. His end solved by the divine providence. Each and every character seek to release from their crimes. To resolve the political system of criminal elements, Vicky’s father himself got trapped in his son’s murder *Jagannath Rai had decided to get rid of his way ward son to secure the support of his way ward flock of MLAs and become Chief Minister. He gave the contract to his trusted hitman, Mukhtar Ansari* (SS, 435). Henceforth the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has taken decision to remove Home Minister to cleanse public life. There was another block buster to be released from the black mail, actress Shabnam Saxena and her secretary Bhola Srivastava murdered Mukhtar Ansari and were arrested for the allegations.

Eketi’s death, who was wrongly accused for the murder of Vicky Rai has electrified the whole population of Sanjai Gandhi Slum The sub-Inspector Vijay Yadav has been detained for implicating Eketi as Naxalite without verifying his antecedents. Arun Advavani writes to Madame President,

In a way we are a responsible to Eketi’s death, complicit in the act through our conspiracy of silence and our tolerance of injustice. There is epidemic of apathy in our country which will result in the deaths of any more Eketis, unless we do something to restore the moral fabric our society. (SS,449)

Eketi was in love with Champi, Bhopali, the face of Bhopal. He promised her that he would cure her blindness. But outcry of Eketi's murder has made to think about Champi to collect sufficient fund for her plastic surgery and retina eye transplant to restore her vision. Eketi's death is considered to be the dawn of New India.

The Novel *Six Suspects* is structured as a series of various characters suspected for the murder of Vicky Rai. Here, Swarup differentiates 'Death of the Celebrity' and 'Death of the Poor' by investigating the Murder. He strongly articulates to give recognition to the conduct of celebrity and the poor in every aspect after death. Vicky Rai's murder is justified for the influence of power, injustice and corruption. While Eketi's death is recognized for the donor of his eye. The study analyzes the juxtaposition of injustice and power through which an individual permeates for the survival of their identity in the globalization era. Swarup disdains the city-born bureaucrat, the actress, the thief, the politician and an American aiming for the purpose of money and power in India. At the same time, he values Eketi for his responsibility for clinging to his traditions. Eketi is symbol of kind, Peace and sacrifice.

In this study, the investigation of the murder is investigating the different characters, in the form of class-struggle. The novel forms as social commentary of India juxtaposed against the rich.

Swarup vindicates Vicky Rai for his escapism from his misdeeds. Swarup, the prolific writer explores the social hierarchies and functions of power in the present scenario. He vividly represents the upper class and downtrodden sections of our society. Through the plot of the novel Swarup imbues that an individual character should mould accordingly to the socially conscious of the rights and duties of each one, irrespective of caste, creed or economic status, to prevent corruption in our society.

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GENDER BIAS IN CLASSICAL INDIAN PANCHATANTRA TALES AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG MINDS

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Abstract

This study investigates the presence of gender stereotypes in classical Indian children's tales, focusing on iconic Panchatantra Tales, and explores their impact on the cognitive and socio-emotional development of young readers. Through a qualitative approach, the portrayal of gender roles within these narratives is analysed, revealing prevailing traditional norms where females are typically caregivers and males are protagonists in public settings. Linguistic aspects of these tales are examined to discern patterns of gender bias, with subtle language choices reinforcing stereotypes. The study underscores the importance of critically engaging with children's literature to create more inclusive representations, promoting positive cognitive and social outcomes. Drawing on feminist theory and critical discourse analysis, the research highlights the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and patriarchal ideologies within Panchatantra tales, advocating for diverse and empowering narratives in children's literature. Recommendations are made for authors, illustrators, policymakers, educators, and parents to actively promote equitable representations, developing greater sensitivity towards diverse gender identities and experiences.

Keywords: *gender stereotypes, panchatantra tales, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, gender roles, traditional norms, classical indian literature, gender bias, children's literature, feminist theory*

Introduction

As I reminisce about my childhood years, I am flooded with memories of the countless storybooks I devoured, each page a new adventure and the lot of characters that sparked my imagination. Some of my favourites were the Adventures of Tenali Raman, Amar Chitra Katha Comics, Panchatantra Tales, Tinkle Comics, The Adventures of Suppandi, Champak Magazine, Grandma's Bag of Stories, Chacha Chaudhary Comics, Jataka Tales, and Akbar and Birbal Stories. The research aims to analyse the portrayal of gender roles, cultural norms, and societal hierarchies embedded within The Panchatantra Tales.

Amongst the tales of wonder and fantasy, I often found myself pondering the depictions of gender within these narratives and questioning their authenticity in reflecting the realities of the world around me. In childhood, when values and perspectives are still taking shape, the stories we

encounter play a pivotal role in shaping our understanding of the world. The process of learning is a continuous journey, and the foundation of this journey is laid by the stories we read, hear, and discuss during our developmental years. As I immersed myself in these narratives, I realized that each story created a universe of its own, inviting me to explore not only the plot but also the characters and their interactions.

Moral Legacies of Panchatantra Tales

In Indian children's literature, a rich collection of ancient oral narratives, including myths, folktales, fables, and legends, forms the foundation. These timeless stories continue to exert a profound influence on contemporary children's books through adaptations and retellings in various print and visual media formats. Navin Menon, a prominent scholar in the field of Indian children's literature, underscores

the enduring significance of these narratives in his article, "Historical Survey of Children's Literature." He highlights how publishers frequently draw upon this vast reservoir of traditional material, including Indian epics, ancient lore, classical tales, and the Panchatantra, to shape the landscape of children's literature today. Menon, N. (1995).

Despite the diverse linguistic backgrounds of Indian children, they are culturally unified in their familiarity with narratives such as the Panchatantra, Mahabharata, and Ramayana, which have been translated into nearly all Indian languages. The fables of Panchatantra, composed in Sanskrit by Pandit Vishnu Sharma approximately 2200 years ago, although not originally intended for children, have become widely translated and read by children globally. Known as 'Nitishastra' or 'a book of wise conduct in life', Panchatantra comprises five books containing various stories nested within one another, where most characters are animals imbued with human characteristics, behaviour patterns, and ethical values. Renowned for their timeless wisdom, moral lessons, and enchanting narratives, Panchatantra Tales have captivated audiences for centuries, rooted in ancient Indian traditions and cultural heritage. This collection of interwoven animal fables attributed to Vishnu Sharma, believed to have been written around 300 BCE, plays a significant role in shaping the moral and ethical fabric of society, imparting valuable life lessons to generations of readers. Framed within a narrative structure of stories told by a wise old Brahmin named Vishnu Sharma to impart worldly wisdom to his young royal charges, Panchatantra explores complex moral dilemmas, human nature, and the consequences of one's actions, offering practical guidance on navigating life's challenges. Gautam, P. K. (2014).

Gender Bias and Dissecting Depictions of Women

In re-interpreting the Panchatantra stories, this paper seeks to examine the depiction of women within them, aligning with Lisa Tuttle's definition of feminist theory as 'asking new questions to old text'.

Panchatantra, though it's been a cherished collection of Indian fables, has been celebrated for its moral teachings and engaging narratives even today. However, conversations among these animals in the tales often contain derogatory remarks about women, with only male characters engaging in discussions about wisdom and moral lessons. So, beneath its seemingly harmless veneer lies entrenched gender biases and stereotypes that warrant critical scrutiny. It serves as a mirror reflecting the gender biases prevalent in ancient Indian society. The need to domesticate women within the stories mirrors real-life societal norms, where women were confined to the household and expected to be submissive to men. The tales perpetuate the stereotype of the obedient and subservient wife, reinforcing patriarchal ideals of marriage and gender roles in the minds of children.

Historically, the origins of Panchatantra tales are steeped in patriarchal traditions, reflective of a society where women were marginalized and relegated to subservient roles. The narrative framework itself, attributed to Vishnu Sharma, continues gendered notions of frailty, ignorance, and deceit, positioning women as inferior to men. Furthermore, the tales serve as a political treatise commissioned by men, for men, perpetuating a worldview that marginalizes and subjugates women.

A close examination of Panchatantra narratives reveals a consistent pattern of gendered representation, where women are predominantly depicted as conniving and manipulative beings. These stories often portray women as seductresses and conspirators, devoid of ethical principles and agency. Motherhood emerges as the sole positive role for women, reinforcing traditional notions of femininity and domesticity.

Themes of adultery, cheating, and violence against women pervade the tales, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and normalizing gender-based violence. Women are confined to the domestic sphere, portrayed solely as wives, mothers, or daughters, reinforcing societal expectations of women's roles and responsibilities.

Conversely, men are depicted as strong leaders and virtuous beings, occupying positions of power and authority within the narratives. The tales emphasize male dominance and superiority, portraying men as ideal husbands and providers, while women are depicted as demanding and ungrateful.

The predominant male-centric nature of the Panchatantra is evident from its outset, with the prelude paying homage to Manu, and the narration commencing with King Amarshakti ruling over Mahilaropya. The king's request to Vishnu Sharma to educate his three sons serves as the catalyst for the composition of Panchatantra. Interestingly, the names of the king and his sons all end with "shakti," symbolizing male dominance. For instance, Amarshakti means 'a man as mighty as gods/eternal power'. Women characters in Panchatantra often occupy stereotypical roles or are portrayed negatively. In one story, the wife of a crocodile and her female friends are depicted as evil and crafty, conspiring to harm her husband's friend, the monkey. Similarly, female assets are presented as mere sexual objects objectifying women.

The depiction of women in Panchatantra extends beyond animal characters to human ones, with stories often portraying them as adulteresses or cunning individuals. For instance, the story of 'A Weaver Cuts the Nose of a Bawd' features two wives, one of whom deceives her husband while the other nearly gets her husband executed through deceit. Such narratives perpetuate negative stereotypes about women, portraying them as untrustworthy and deceitful.

Vishnu Sharma's commentary within the Panchatantra further reinforces gender biases, with verses attributing negative traits to women, such as impurity, scorn, untruthfulness, and excessive greediness.

In contrast, there are instances in Panchatantra where women are portrayed positively, such as the wise and kind wife of a Brahmin in Book V. However, such portrayals are rare and often overshadowed by the prevailing patriarchal narrative.

Modern feminist Suniti Namjoshi has reimagined some Panchatantra fables in her work 'Feminist Fables', introducing characters like the Blue Donkey to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

Gender Representation and its Impact on Young Minds

Anuradha Sharma, a lecturer at Navjivan Arts and Commerce College, critiques the biased portrayal of women in the Panchatantra, where they are depicted as ignorant, speechless, and manipulative, perpetuating negative stereotypes. Vishnu Sharma, the author, reinforces distrust in women and emphasizes their submissive role as sacrificial beings, conforming to male-centric societal norms. Sharma, A. (n.d.)

These narratives, influenced by ancient Hindu law codes like the Manu Smriti, enforce rigid gender roles, depicting women primarily as future mothers, submissive wives, and pleasing mistresses. They serve as a platform to convey societal norms to children, shaping their understanding of gender roles and expectations. Female characters are often associated with domestic chores and caregiving roles, while male characters engage in adventurous and professional pursuits, reinforcing traditional gender roles.

Hamilton et al. (2006) argues that stereotyped portrayals of gender and the underrepresentation of female characters in children's literature have detrimental effects on children's development. They suggest that such portrayals can limit children's career aspirations, shape their attitudes towards future roles as parents, and even influence their personality characteristics. This lack of equal representation also affects girls' ability to associate with their gender and demonstrate their place in society, particularly in light of growing support for LGBTQA+ issues. Gender stereotypes, as defined by the authors, encompass assumptions about the physical appearance, abilities, attitudes, interests, and occupations associated with each gender. These stereotypes are pervasive, influencing children's

perceptions from an early age and restricting their freedom to explore their full potential.

Traditionally, women in literature have been described from the perspective of men, perpetuating gender stereotypes and limiting the representation of women in various roles. Despite advancements in gender equality and expanded opportunities for both sexes in contemporary society, gender role stereotypes persist, particularly disadvantaging women. The assumption that gender roles have evolved beyond traditional constraints in the 21st century is challenged by ongoing disparities and negative implications for women.

An examination of gender in children's literature in India reveals its presence in various forms, including language, narrative content, and character portrayal. Studies, such as one conducted in 1995, have demonstrated a bias towards male characters, with male names being repeated more frequently than female names. Ironically, even books with gender-neutral names often centre their narratives around male characters, while female characters are relegated to stereotypical roles such as sweetness, naivety, and dependence, contrasting with the strong, adventurous, and independent traits attributed to male characters.

For instance, the *Kathasaritsagara*, or the *Ocean of the Streams of Stories*, written in the 11th century in Sanskrit, features fairy tales and legends with female characters and goddesses. However, these stories predominantly revolve around male characters, with a noticeable disparity in the representation of male and female characters. This underrepresentation of female characters not only limits children's ability to identify with their gender but also perpetuates gender stereotypes that influence their cognitive processes and socialization.

The significance of children's literature in India as contested sites of tradition and dissent, highlights the lasting impact of childhood reading experiences and emphasizes the coexistence of tradition and dissent in shaping children's literature. This perspective underscores the importance of challenging traditional narratives to promote more inclusive and diverse

representations in children's literature, developing critical thinking and cultural evolution.

Cultural Expectations based on Gender

In every society and culture, distinct expectations regarding the behaviours of different genders prevail, encompassing aspects such as dress, speech, conduct, domestic and outdoor activities, and leisure pursuits. Traditionally, males have been ascribed the role of breadwinners, while females are often designated as primary caregivers, tasked with responsibilities like child-rearing, household chores, and meal preparation. These gendered expectations contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypical gender roles, which children observe and internalize within their familial, societal, and everyday contexts. Consequently, children tend to emulate behaviours deemed "appropriate" based on these societal norms, a phenomenon readily evident in children's storybooks.

Through these narratives, children receive messages about gender roles, familial dynamics, and societal expectations, which shape their perceptions and attitudes from an early age. Research suggests that children begin to acquire gender identity and understand gender roles even before they set foot in a classroom, internalizing societal norms and expectations through familial and cultural influences (Bahiyah et al., 2008).

The portrayal of genders and the language used to describe them within children's storybooks carry significant weight, as they serve as a bridge between the fictional worlds of literature and the realities of everyday life. Therefore, it becomes imperative to examine and raise awareness about gender representation and language use in children's literature. By critically analysing these aspects, we can better understand the messages conveyed to young readers and work towards developing more inclusive and empowering narratives.

Language, as a fundamental aspect of communication, plays a pivotal role in reinforcing and disseminating societal norms and attitudes. As Kalia (1986) aptly asserts, "Language uses us as much as we use language; so, sexist language vents, spreads, and reinforces sex role stereotypes" (p. 794).

The language we employ not only reflects but also shapes our perceptions, values, and perspectives. When language fails to represent genders equally, it perpetuates and legitimizes existing gender biases and stereotypes. Thus, an examination of the portrayal of gender in children's storybooks becomes imperative to discern how language is utilized to construct and reinforce gendered identities and roles.

Conclusion

In conclusion, stories children read play a significant role in shaping their values, beliefs, and practices, as they learn about how genders are viewed and represented in society. However, if the depiction of gender roles in storybooks is biased or stereotyped, it can limit children's perspectives and reinforce narrow understandings of gender. As Drees and Phye (2001) assert, "As children enjoy the stories, they absorb the content provided using the experience to formulate their gender roles" (p. 49). Therefore, it is crucial to critically examine how characters of different genders are portrayed and the language used to describe them in children's storybooks. This awareness is essential for parents, educators, and schools in selecting and reading storybooks, as well as for authors and illustrators to create gender-neutral depictions of characters and language usage. Also, the impact of gender representation in children's literature, as exemplified by the Panchatantra, underscores the need for retelling these ancient stories to ensure equal representation of female and male characters. Thus, Panchatantra warrants re-examination in light of its gender-biased ideology. As a foundational text in Indian literature, it is imperative to critically analyse its portrayal of women and challenge the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes. By interrogating the gender biases embedded within Panchatantra tales, we can strive

towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society for future generations.

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TRAUMA AND COLLECTIVE VICTIMHOOD OF DALITS: AN ANALYSIS OF OMPRAKASH VALMIKI'S JOOTHAN

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Abstract

Trauma is a disruptive experience that impacts the individual's identity and formation of their thoughts. The social communities who experience trauma find a way of dealing with it. Writing is a known coping mechanism for people on a path to healing. Healing for Dalit community, however, seems a distant dream in view of their ongoing struggle over centuries. The lives of the Dalits are impregnated with sufferings. They become the focal point for inquisitive minds to visualize the ordeals the oppressed. A wider study of their lives is a requirement of the day to empathize with the outblowing agony of the heinously affected marginalized community. Omprakash Valmiki is a distinguished Indian writer and an esteemed activist who worked hard to uplift the Dalit community. His autobiographical work, *Joothan* lays every detail of his traumatic experiences by describing his whole life. This paper tries to explore the idea of trauma in the life of Dalits and their recovery to achieve self-identity.

Keywords: trauma, disruptive, marginalized, oppressed and self-identity

Trauma is a word that originated from 17th century Greek, which meant wound. It is a deeply psychological or physical distressing experience, it can also be termed as emotional terror which results from a horrible experience like physical and mental abuse. Trauma leads to long term neurosis. Trauma Theory is a psycho-analytical study first derived by Sigmund Freud, which analyses a new paradigm of conscious and unconscious functioning of the mind. Trauma theory emerged in the 1960s when atrocities against women and children were recognised for identifying the post-traumatic stress disorder in war veterans. The psychic scars in the mind of people result in trauma.

Omprakash Valmiki is an Indian Dalit writer and poet, well known for his autobiography *Joothan*, a milestone in Dalit literature. Being a Dalit child, he was tortured and abused everywhere in society. *Joothan* literally means left overs from a meal. It also means polluted or unfit for consumption by another person. For centuries, the Dalits have been forced, under various circumstances to eat *Joothan* for

subsistence. Thus, the title conveys the pain and the humiliation faced by the author and his community, who remained at the bottom of the social strata for centuries. Valmiki through the novel depicts before the readers, every traumatic experiences by describing his whole life.

Joothan: A Dalit's Life by Omprakash Valmiki is a work of Dalit literature that appears in the tradition of Bildungsroman narratives. It traces out the growth of Valmiki from an untouchable child to an educated Dalit activist. The non-linear narration of the text is grounded upon his memories of that life which is excruciatingly painful, charred by bitter experiences. The caste system in India isolated innumerable dalits, from the mainstream of life. Being socially segregated for centuries, they are obliged to live a helpless life without even the minimal facilities. Their life is marked by disgrace, humiliation, dishonor, suppression, and discrimination. They are supposedly destined to live and serve the people of the higher castes and die for them as well.

Valmiki narrates his experience with the life's encounters, pain, agony, and struggles to overcome them. He was only allowed to sit near doors in the school from where he could not even see the blackboard clearly. Often he was beaten by the teachers without any reason. The Head master of the school ordered him to sweep the whole school continuously for three days and was not allowed to sit in the classroom. His father happens to see his position while he is sleeping and started enquiring about it. He seizes the broom and throws it away and shouted loudly "Who is that teacher, the progeny of Dronacharya, who forces my son to sweep?" (6). This incident boosts him to face his future with confidence.

The question of identity is the most disputed issue in modern times and literature because of the identity crisis in all communities. In *Joothan* the choice of Valmiki's surname is greatly debated and asserted in the last pages of book. Some of his friends, relatives, and colleagues found the choice of the surname "Valmiki" humiliating or offensive. But for others it was a mark of "self-assertion" and "being very brave" (124). Even though he deals with a number of pages regarding his dilemma and the questions faced by the selection of his surname, he finally clings to the name 'Valmiki.' He points out the reasons behind others running away from their "inferiorized" identities and comes to a simple and a naked fact:

Behind all such fact is the anguish of identity crisis, which has come about as a reaction to the blatant inhumanity of casteism. Dalits want to join the mainstream of society after getting an education but the Savarna prevents from doing so... In these times of dire danger to our existence, when a man like me comes around with his caste marker surname, all those people who want to hide their caste become wary... they find it easier to run away from the problem. But the fact is that change won't come about through running away. It will come about through struggle and engagement. (127)

Caste names especially those of Dalits had been often used as terms of abuse. Laws like Protection of

Civil Rights of 1976 and The Untouchability Offence Act of 1995 prohibit the use of caste markers. In spite of this, *Joothan* talks about the deeply entrenched notion of sin in the minds of people. Regardless of the names given by the parents, a major marker of identity for people belonging to different castes had been the caste name. For the upper castes, Valmiki is always "Chuhre Ka". He becomes Munshiji to his father who seeks redemption through his son. He consciously takes up the last name Valmiki in his later life which is a strategy of self naming. He simultaneously links himself to his Dalit origins and also his lineage to the epic poet from India. By drawing attention to caste markers, which negatively stereotypes Valmiki, draws attention to the practices that has to be expurgated.

Valmiki talks about a family who becomes very close to them thinking that he is a Brahmin. They think that the surname "Valmiki" is a Brahmin surname and hence the doors are opened to him and is given certain privileges. The daughter of Kulkarni falls in love with Valmiki. But later when she realizes that he is a Dalit, her attitude undergoes a sea change. This incident creates a deep scar in the mind of Valmiki, but he never becomes weak. He becomes an active social worker in the days that follow with the aim of providing self-dignity and identity to the Dalits. Thus he becomes a member of Dalit Panthers and together with many leaders started a battle for the Dalit selfhood that Dr. Ambedkar asserted. He also talks about his surname and how it creates a future in literary and social circles. While every Dalit tries to remove their surname, he wishes to keep his surname which is like a slap on the face of the upper caste superiority that he engulfs from the nation from time immemorial. He proudly discusses about the surname in these lines:

This surname is now an unavoidable part of my name. Omprakash has no identity without it. "Identity" and "recognition", the two words say a lot by themselves. Dr. Ambedkar was born in a Dalit family. But Ambedkar signifies a Brahmin teacher of his. When joined with "Bhimrao", however it becomes his identity, completely changing its

meaning in the process. Today “Bhimrao” has no meaning without Ambedkar. (132)

Thus, Omprakash Valmiki throughout this novel establishes a Dalit identity. In *Joothan*, at the end of the book he asks, “Why is my cast only my identity” (134). *Joothan* is a symbol of the developing consciousness of the Dalit community. Valmiki knows that the best way of exposing the conditions and situations of the Dalit community is by narrating his own experience as a Dalit. His eloquent words: “We need an ongoing struggle and a consciousness of struggle, a consciousness that brings revolutionary change both in the outside world and in hearts, a consciousness that leads the process of social change” (134) are an inspiration to the younger generations of Dalit to attain an identity.

Protest and resistance is a kind of evolution. According to Jasbir Jain, resistance in art forms is an indication that society is not dying, that there has to be a constant struggle to keep alive. Instead of facing subjugation at the hands of the powerful, resistance literature uses the language of the dominant to challenge their ideologies. Omprakash Valmiki vociferously depicts resistance in *Joothan*. The seeds of rebellion are sown early in the oppressed life of Valmiki. The humiliation and the mental torture that Valmiki suffers creates deep scars in his mind, but displayed an unusual form of resistance. Thus he becomes a member of the Dalit Panthers and together with many leaders started a battle for the Dalit selfhood that Dr Ambedkar had asserted.

The poor economic background forces Valmiki to drop his studies and to engage in agriculture. He becomes noisy having seen his schoolmates passing by with books in their hands. One day after returning from the farm, he meets Sukhdan Singh who asks him, “Why you have stopped coming to school? Aren’t you going to study further?” (74). He just shakes his head in refusal and returns home with miserable feelings. As soon as he comes home, he tells his mother, “Ma, I want to go to school” (75). His tears touch the mind of his mother, and at last because of his bhabhi he started education. This incident clearly portrays the mental strength of

Valmiki to resist against the exploitation and discrimination faced by him.

Joothan resists all sorts of superstitions predominant in the country. Valmiki narrates a series of incidents that throw light on the psyche of the average Indian whose mind is filled with seeds of superstitions. In relation to the superstition, a person who feels unwell in “Bhangi Basti,” instead of treating him with the medicine, people tried things like getting rid of the evil spirits. If the disease was complicated, they called for *bhagat* for pucha or exorcism. The *bhangis* believe that *bhagat* or baba is the mediator of God and when he caught the insatiate soul he brings pigs, roosters, rams, and liquor as offerings to God. Such hungry God and Goddess are worshipped in every house of “Bhangi Basti.” Valmiki narrates when he was at Dehradun, during summer holidays, he felt sick with dysentery. His father tried to show a number of quacks but the physical condition of Valmiki did not improve. Finally his father called out the Bhagat from Kendki but it was not tolerable for Valmiki, therefore he shouted on the Bhagat and said to his father, “He will kill me if you don’t stop him. I do not have any spirit sticking to me” (43). It was a blow to the entire Dalit community who blindly followed superstitions. Thus he strongly resisted the evils of blind superstitions and spread light to his community.

As a student, Valmiki resisted and questioned the ill treatment meted out to him and his community. One such episode is recorded by him in *Joothan* when he questions his teacher in the classroom, “So Ashwathama was given flour mixed in water instead of milk, but what about us who had to drink mar? How come we were never mentioned in an epic? Why didn’t an epic poet ever write a word on our lives?” (23). Valmiki is right. The untouchable remains useless and their traumatic life remained unsung in the history of India. Their trauma was not even considered by the people of the upper caste as well as the literary artists. The opposition and the daring act of Valmiki asking his teacher about the plight of their life is a symbol of resistance by the whole untouchable community.

The complete rejection of untouchability by Valmiki is one of the strongest episodes in the novel. One day, Valmiki goes to work in the farm of Fauza Singh Tyagi. At the middle of the day, Fauza's mother brings lunch. All the members belonging to the Tyagi family gather under the shelter of tree and Chuhras sit down under the sun with two rotis and a piece of pickle and this is noticed by Valmiki who refuses to eat with them. Fauza shouts at him and swearing: "Abey Chuhreke... Just because he has learnt to read a little he has above himself... Abey, don't forget who you are" (24). The birth of revolt starts in the mind of Valmiki. Finally, Fauza's mother calls: 'Khajoirwalike... come... and eat your rotis' (25). He accepts the food given by her. She too dropped the rotis into his hand from way above, lest her hand touches him. This symptom became an insult to him, who throws it in the face of Fauza's mother and runs away towards home. This incident has an impact on the entire 'bhangibasti', and therefore people refuse to work without wages.

Reviewing *Joothan: A Dalit's Life*, Namita Arora says that, "Valmiki's narrative voice brims with a quiet sense of outrage at what he had to endure as a human..., it attempts to shame them into introspection. This is the kind of book that becomes the axe for the frozen sea inside us" (175). As Sarah Beth, in *Dalit Autobiographies in Hindi: The Transformation of Pain into Resistance*, says, "Dalit individual uses his narrative to raise his voice for those who are silenced by caste oppression" (545). Valmiki points out that he grows up in those days of the post independent India when people in general were not ready to accept the right even to primary education for the people of Dalit community. Everywhere he was isolated, ill-treated, and ridiculed by the people of upper caste. As long as the people do not know to which caste he belongs, their attitude remains sympathetic and positive but the moment they realize that Valmiki belongs to the Chuhra

community, there comes a change in their attitude. But he resists the evils of the society with his will power and becomes successful in awakening the consciousness of Dalits. The transgenerational aspect of trauma is a fact that all over the world Dalits experience their collective trauma as being a part of the Dalit community. It is only by the availability of education and having a space to narrate their traumatic experience that they healed from their traumatic wounds.

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THE VALUE OF PRACTISING FRENCH GRAMMAR PART-I

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Abstract

The value of practising French Grammar provides readers with a practical understanding of modern French spoken and written. It offers a multitude of extra interactive exercises to aid in the consolidation of difficult grammatical concepts. Intended for both in-class usage and independent study. Practising French Grammar offers succinct descriptions of important grammatical ideas at the start of each exercise, model responses to the problems, and translations of challenging words.

Keywords: *grammar materials, interactive exercises, reading, listening, understanding french grammar, communication*

Introduction

Grammar is significant because it is the foundation of language and it provides guidelines for constructing words and phrases that facilitate clear communication. We start by outlining some basic grammar principles that you should be aware of before going over some typical errors and how to correct them via practice. Speaking French is a great approach to get better at the language. Regular practice is essential whether you're learning about sentence structure, noun genders, or verb conjugations. The following advice will assist you.

Start with the Fundamentals

Start with the fundamentals of French grammar, which include articles (le, la, les), pronouns (je, tu, il/elle), and simple verb conjugations (être, avoir, aller).

Utilize Grammar Materials

Workbooks, textbooks, and internet materials pertaining to French grammar abound. You may practice by using the organized lessons and activities available on websites like as Duolingo, Babbel, and Kwiziq.

Practice Often

Set aside some time throughout your studies to perform grammar drills on a regular basis. The secret to learning any language skill is consistency.

Concentrate on Weak Areas

Recognize and concentrate on your grammatical weaknesses. Focused practice can help you get better at everything from comprehending complicated sentence structures to conjugating irregular verbs.

Read and Listen

You may assist yourself organically internalize grammatical ideas by reading novels, watching movies, or listening to podcasts that expose you to French in context.

Seek Feedback

With native speakers or language exchange partners, practice writing and speaking in French. They can offer insightful criticism on your use of grammar and assist you in getting better.

Maintain a Grammar Journal

Fill up a journal with exercises, examples, and rules related to French grammar. Regularly going over your notes might help you retain what you've learned.

Make Flashcards

On one side of each flashcard, write examples and grammar rules. Take self-tests frequently to make sure you grasp the material.

Put Yourself to the Test

As you grow, challenge yourself to increasingly complex grammatical ideas. Take on more challenging subjects like relative pronouns and subjunctive mood without fear.

Be Persistent and Patient

It takes time and effort to learn a language, especially its grammar. Continue to be persistent and patient, and acknowledge your accomplishments as you go.

Improved Communication Skills

You can speak more effectively both orally and in writing when you are proficient in French grammar. You'll be able to communicate more effectively and precisely with native French speakers as a result of your improved ability to express yourself.

Cultural Appreciation

Studying grammar offers insights into the mindsets and customs of French-speaking populations, going beyond simple language instruction. You may better understand the subtleties of French literature, art, and culture by being aware of grammar.

Possibilities for Employment

Mastering French grammar may lead to a number of employment options. Possessing excellent language abilities is frequently highly regarded, whether you're looking for work in diplomatic missions, international organizations, or global corporations.

Academic Goals

A strong command of grammar is necessary if you want to pursue postsecondary education or do research in areas connected to French language, literature, or culture. It serves as the basis for critical analysis and more complex research.

Personal Development

Acquiring proficiency in French grammar may lead to both intellectual stimulation and personal fulfillment. As you get beyond language barriers, it tests your cognitive powers, sharpens your problem-solving techniques, and gives you more self-assurance.

Cross-Cultural Relations

Mastery of French grammar facilitates meaningful relationships with French-speaking people and communities worldwide. It gives you the chance to make friends, participate in cross-cultural interactions, and discover fresh viewpoints.

Trip and Exploration

Being able to use French grammar when traveling to French-speaking nations improves your trip experience. You can get more comfortable navigating conventions, engaging with people, and fully immersing oneself in the many cultural offerings of French-speaking areas.

Respect for Linguistic Diversity

Learning French grammar helps you gain a deeper awareness of linguistic differences and structures. You have a better understanding of linguistic variety when you contrast French grammar with that of your home tongue or other languages you are familiar with.

Lifelong Learning

Acquiring knowledge of French grammar is an ongoing process that tests and deepens your grasp of the language. No matter how experienced you are, there is always something new to learn and become proficient at.

Global Citizenship

Being able to use French grammar effectively fosters tolerance, cooperation, and understanding amongst people from different cultural backgrounds and language backgrounds in today's linked globe.

Conclusion

Overall, learning French grammar enhances your communication abilities and has a multitude of positive effects on your social, professional, and cultural interactions.

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INDIAN LITERATURE- HAYAVADANA

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Abstract

Girish karanda's sophisticated drama " Hayavadana " explores issues of identity, love, and the human condition. The three main protagonists in the story are Padmini, Devadatta, and Kapila. The lovely and charming wife of Devadatta, Padmini, is caught between her husband and the attractive and accomplished warrior, Kapila. Because of his physical constraints, especially his incomplete human form without a head, Devadatta, an educated brahmin, battles with thoughts of inadequacy. On the other hand, Kapila is strong physically but shallow intellectually. The main issue begins when Devadatta accidentally causes a mix-up while attempting to obtain a full human form by asking a great goddess for assistance. Devadatta gets the head of Kapila, and Kapila get the head of Devadatta. This interaction between the two people represents the play's thematic investigation of the topic of whether a person's true identity is defined by their physical or intellectual traits. The characters struggle with their new identities as the narrative progresses. At first attracted to Kapila's body, Padmini finds it difficult to accept his new form. Now that he has Kapila's head, Devadatta is conflicted over whether to be friends with Kapila or to love Padmini. With Devadatta's head, Kapila struggles with his new look but feels a renewed drive for knowledge. Hayavadana examines the intricacies of human aspirations, the effects of society standards, and the illusive search for self-acceptance and completion through complicated dialogues, monologues, and dramatic sequences. The drama's tragic yet thought- provoking resolution at the end invites the audience to reflect on the essence of identity and the role that physical and intellectual characteristics play in determining human connections and fates.

Keywords: *identity, love triangle, human condition, brahmin, goddess, friendship, tragicomedy*

Article Research

Hayavadana is a fascinating play written by the renowned Indian playwright, Girish karnad. Set against the backdrop of ancient Indian mythology, the play delves into themes of identity, love and the complexities of human nature. With its rich symbolism and thought-provoking narrative. Hayavadana captivates audiences with its exploration of the human condition

A prologue sets the scene for the drama that will play out throughout the play. The main conflict that propels the story ahead is introduced, along with the characters. The figures of Devadatta, Kapila, and Hayavadana serve as metaphors for the idea of identity, which is central to the narrative. known for his wisdom and morality. Devadatta is a young brahmin scholar. Beautiful Padmini, the daughter of a wealthy merchant, has captured his heart. But because he feels inadequate because of his physical limitations. Devadatta suffers from feelings of inadequacy. The urge that finally brings him to

ruin is his longing to have the vigor and strength of a warrior.

Young brahmin scholar Devadatta is renowned for his virtue and brilliance. The stunning Padmini, the affluent merchant's daughter, has captured his heart. Devasatta, however, suffers from feelings of inadequacy since he thinks his physical limitations make him inadequate. His desire to have the strength of a warrior ultimately proves to be his undoing. The kshatriya warrior Kapila, on the other hand, is well-known for his physical strength. He wants to marry Padmini since he is likewise in love with in love with her. Kapila is plagued by his lack of intelligence and education despite his power and self-assurance. His perceived lack of mental capacity makes him feel inferior to Devadatta, he tries to make up for it by being physically strong.

The play gains a fantastical and mythological quality from Hayavadana persona. A childless couple received a divine favor that resulted in the horse-headed being known as Hayavadana. Hayavadana is

a human with human feelings and wants despite his form. He becomes very attached to Devadatta and Kapila, becoming caught up in their intricate relationship with Padmini. Much of the plot revolves around the love triangle that exists between Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini as each person struggles with their own desires and fears. In an attempt to feel whole, Devadatta seeks the assistance of a strong deity, who gives him Kapila's body but not his head. The protagonist ideas of identity and self-worth are put to the test by a series of events that follow this metamorphosis.

While Devadatta fights to accept his new identity and body, Kapila battles feelings of inadequacy of his own. Padmini is unable to decide between Devadatta intelligence and Kapila might, therefore she is divided between the two men. As all of this is going on Hayavadana is a silent observer, thinking about the foolishness of human desires and the result of interfering with divine power. Girish karnad skillfully combines psychological drama, mythology, and folklore to produce a compelling story that is told throughout the play. The characters struggle with universal issues like love, envy and the pursuit of purpose in an inconsistent world.

By combining language and symbolism, karnad takes Hayavadana beyond the realm of a mere love tale to provoking examination of identity and the human condition. Hayavadana challenges viewer to consider the intricacies of life and the never-ending search for self-discovery by leaving them with more questions than solutions in the end. The play speaks to the universal feelings of loss, longing, and the never-ending quest to find one's place in the world. It is a work that crosses cultural barriers. Worldwide audiences are enthralled and motivated by Hayavadana because of its ageless concepts and striking graphics.

Conclusion

Hayavadana is fundamentally concerned with issues of identity, satisfaction, and completion. Characters like Padmini, Devadatta, and Kapila are particularly

good at illustrating how the characters battle with their dual natures. The human longing for a flawless, all encompassing love for both if Devadatta aspect-his cerebral sides and his physical aspect as the horse-headed Hayavadana. There tension reach a breaking point in the play's ending. The characters internal conflicts are literally portrayed in the climactic scene, where Hayavadana's head is switched with Devadatta's. Even though it provides a short-term fix, this action also emphasizes how pointless it is to look outside oneself comes to understand that genuine contentment originates from within and cannot be attained by making glam or miraculous fixes.

The drama by karnad also explores the concepts of fate and free will. As the characters struggle with the effects of their decisions, the human condition is explored in greater detail. The sad and poetic conclusion, in which Padmini choose to live with the heads of both Devadatta and hayavadana, captures the conflicting, chaotic, and profoundly meaningful character of existence itself.

Hayavadana end with a poignant message about the intricacy of human existence, in essences. It challenges viewers to consider the meaning of identity, love, and the pursuit of self-awareness. Long after the last curtain rises, the concepts of the play will continue to ring true thanks to its open-ended finale, which invites analysis and reflection. In Girish karnad's drama Hayavadana, themes emotions and philosophical questions are intricately interwoven towards the end. The resolution reflects the inherent complexity and ambiguities of life rather than offering a clean, straightforward conclusion.

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INDIAN LITERATURE

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Abstract

Indian literature is composed of a vast array of literary work from different eras and languages. It provides a thorough understanding of Indian customs, belief, values while reflecting the country's cultural, social, and historical facets. Stories and themes from the vedas, Upanishada, purana, Geeta, ramayana, Mahabharata, and Buddhist texts are incorporated into Indian works. Numerous methodologies and folktales, including the purana, the epics, the Vedic shloka, and local legends, form the basis of hindu culture. Hindu is musesa variety of conceptual framework to describe it's laws, sacraments, traditions, customs, and belief system. Legends and myths have a fundamental role in human life. They 've always been in our immediate vicinity. Even though their legitimacy is questionable, no one appers to care because theyserve us evidence of people's believe in super natural Powers. Indian mythology is colourful and lively, and it offers some of the most romantic narratives in history. One of the most well – known female characters in Indian literature is shakuntala. The Mahabharata is where shakuntala's character first appeared. Since then, she has appearedin numerous literature return in different Indian languages. This dissertation aims toexamine the ways in which writtees from antiquity to the present have portrayed shakuntala. Her name sake may be legendary, but she is brave, vivacious, and creative.

She has knowns ince she was a young child that women a redis crimated against.

Keywords: representation, subordination identity feminism, true love.

Research Article

The epic Mahabharata tells the tale of Shakuntala in its original form. The main the me of the narrative is love. Shakuntala, the heroine, has an instant attraction on the monarch Dushyanta, the hero. She had a lovely smile, a well-proportioned body, and was as tunning young woman. Her graceful physical beauty was only one aspect of her attractiveness; theother was her endearing nature. The epic Mahabharata, an old Indian work, tells the tale. Vishwamitra once began meditating in order to become a brahmarshi. Indra was alarmedby his penance's intensity. Vishwamitra might claim his throne, he feared. Menaka, anapsara, is sent by Indra to entice him out of his penance in order to terminate it. Menaka approached Vishwamitra as he was meditating and began to entice him. Vishwamitra' spenance was shattered since he was unable to restrain his lust and longing. After ten years of cohabitation, Vishwa mitraand Menaka welcome dadaughter and as on into their family. Eventually, Vishwa mitrerealized that all had been a deceptionof Indra.

It dawned on him that he could manage his feelings. He therefore informed Menaka thatthey

would never be together. Before ascending to heaven, Vishwamitra abandoned Menaka, who then left the infant close to Rishi Kanva's ancestral home. Shakunta's bird surrounding the two new borns that Rishi Kanva discovered in his hermitage. Thus, he gave the infant the name Shakuntala. The forest serves as the focal point of Shakuntala's story. King Dushyanta first encountered shakuntala while traveling through the forest with his army. He was pursuing a maleddeer wounded by his weopen. Shakingaka and

Dush yanta fell in love with each other and got married. Before returning to his kingdom he gave shakuntala as a symbol of his promise to his wife and bring to her palace. Shakuntala's life was filled with a great deal of worry an duncertainty as are sult of this promise. She dreamed about her new spouse, Dushyant, a lot. Her day dreams would frequently diverther attention. Durvasa, a prominent Rishi, visited the Ashrama one day, but Shakuntala was too preoccupied thinking about Dushyant to give him the traditional greeting. Furiousat being treated so poorly, the risshi cursed Shakuntala, claiming that

the person she was dreaming about would completely forget a boucher. Shakuntala's buddy promptly in for med him of her friend's distraction a she stormed off in a age. The Rishi changed his curse,

Declaring that the person who had forgotten Shakuntala would remember everything, afterseeing that his intense anger was unwarranted. She had to fight for her identity because of this conflict. To reach his country, Dushyant had to leave the forest. As time went by, he did not come back. He spends several years becoming overly involved in state matters. Waiting for Dushyant, Shakuntala fell into despair. She couldn't shake the vision of Dushyant. Shakuntala eventually made the decision to travel to the capital city with her foster father and a few of her friends, wondering why Dushyant had not come back for her. Shakuntala was tempted to run her fingers in the deep blue waters of their river as they crossed it by canoe ferry on their journey.

She was unaware that her ring had fallen off her fingers. As a result, she suffered much humiliation and disdain before even arriving at the Dushyant court and lost the symbol of love. Shakuntala was shocked and offended when her husband did not recognize her when she arrived at Dushyant Court and could not remember anything about her. She attempted to remind him that she was his wife, but Dushyant was unable to

recognize her in the absence of the ring. The courtroom embarrassed her. When Dushyant rejected her, she was astounded to hear it. Shakuntala's life was filled with a great deal of worry and uncertainty as a result of this Ignorance. She went back to the forest, picked up her son, and went to live alone in a world of the forest. Though she was rejected by her husband, she did not hate him. Here she had to survive alone, without any support from husband. She spent her days in a meaningless and endless waiting while Bharatha, her son, grew older. Her frustration led her to live with in security and uncertainty. Surrounded only by wild animals, Bharatha grew to be a strong youth and made as part of opening the mouths of tigers and lions and counting their teeth. Meanwhile, a fisherman was surprised to find a royal ring in the belly of a fish he had caught. Recognising the theory also, he took

thering to the palace and, upon seeing hisring, dushyanta memories of his lovely bride came rushing back to him. He went straight out to find her.

She realized she was no longer at her father's ashram upon arriving. In his search for his wife, he ventured farther into the forest where he discovered an unexpected sight : a small child had forced open a lion's mouth and was occupied with counting the animal's teeth. The king greeted the youngster and inquired about his name after witnessing his extraordinary feats, which seemed to be mostly granted by gods. When the youngster replied that he was Bharata, the son of King Dushyanta, he astonished him. In awe of the youngster's audacity and strength, the king requested that the boy accompany him to his mother. After the boy brought him to Shakuntala, the family was reunited thanks to their combined wisdom. Shakuntala's humiliations and hopelessness could be lessened by the conflict. The agony of Shakuntala, who hoped without hope for her husband's home coming, is poignantly illustrated in the story. She made an effort to make her presence known despite social exclusion.

Conclusion

The story of Shakuntala's encounter, marriage, separation and Reunion with her husband, Dushyanta, has been immortalized. In the Mahabharata and in Abhijnana Shakuntala. In both texts. The protagonist Shakuntala is an embodiment of pain, Hardship and helpless woman. She was a poor woman who Struggled for the acknowledgement of her love, marriage and Identity in order to establish the parental identity of her son Which is very importance in the eye of the society. She is a Representative of a typical Indian woman. Her loyalty to her Husband ennobles her as an exemplary woman, the ideal. Her Love is real and divine.

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SUBALTERN LITERATURE

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Abstract

“History is written by the victors, but the subaltern speaks. Their voices, though marginalized, hold the key to understanding the true complexities of society”

– Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

This paper explores the theme of oppression faced by the subaltern through a comparative analysis of Mahesh Dattani’s “seven steps Around the Fire” and Mahasweta Devi’s “ Draupadi.” Both works delve into the complexities of societal hierarchies, power dynamics, and the struggles of marginalized individuals within the framework of Indian society. Drawing upon insight from subaltern studies, the paper examines how the characters in these works navigate oppressive structure and assert their agency in the face of adversity. By juxtaposing these two works, this paper seeks to illuminate the multifaceted nature of oppression and the diverse strategies employed by the subaltern to resist and negotiate their circumstances. Through close textual analysis and theoretical engagement with concepts from subaltern studies, the paper aims to deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics of power and resistance in Indian.

Keywords: *subaltern, class, progressive society, historiography, others.*

This paper is dealing with history of the society and social concept with special focus of the class and equality concept from the West and East. Looking into the history says western intellectual schools gave the name of this concept as Subaltern Studies, and fire in the west the revolution started for the voiceless people. In Indian society also dominated by the same notion from the ancient tradition and following the west they also started raising voice for the poor and voiceless.

Similarly, “Draupadi” by Mahasweta Devi present a searing portrayal of oppression, focusing on the plight of tribal communities in India. Through the character of Doodhimeh, Devi confronts the brutal realities of caste-based violence, land exploitation, and gender discrimination. Doodhi’s defiant resistance against her oppressors becomes a powerful symbol of resilience and defiance in the face of systemic injustice. Devi’s narrative not only sheds light on the specific struggles of tribal women but also underscores the broader themes of exploitation and marginalization experienced by the subaltern in Indian society.

Subaltern literature refers to literary works that give voice to marginalized and oppressed groups

within society, often focusing on their experience, struggles, and perspectives. Emerging primarily from post colonial contexts, subaltern literature challenges dominant narratives and offers alternative perspectives on history, society, and power dynamics. Writers of subaltern literature often belong to marginalized communities themselves and use their writing as a means of resistance, empowerment, and cultural preservation.

Subaltern studies is a prominent and newborn school of thought in the Historical studies of India. It advocates a particular way to read, write and interpret history. It follows a systematic approach to view the events of history and past. Subaltern Studies Group was formed in 1979 under the guidance of historical Ranajit Guha at the university of Sussex in England.

Subalternity as a form turns into an umbrella concept which increases the scope of research from various subaltern perspectives. People existing at present would readily like to inhabit the situation of a subaltern whose silence is perhaps voiced through the advocating demonstration of the intellectual. However, Spivak warns in condition of an enduring subordination. Subaltern studies became a unique

place for a new kind of history from below, a people's history free of national constrictions, a post nationalist re-imagining of the Indian nation on the underside, at the margine, outside nationalism. Subaltern studies also became entangled with efforts to re-imagine history itself. It re-invented subalternity.

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CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS* FROM A LIBERAL FEMINISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The women writers in West Africa worked under many literary and social disabilities. The African women writers are considered more as late comers in the field of writing. The third generation witnesses the challenges of feminist critics where Nigerian feminists like Chikwenye, Okonjo struggled to include women writings in the canon where only male writers works who write on male characters for male audience were canonized. They have left no trace of women's writings where they would have faced gender specific obstacles. Among women writers Adichie is one of the important novelists. "Madeleine Hron's 'Orana-azunwa The Figure of the Child in Third-Generation Nigerian Novels proposes a way of the western critical reductionism by exploring the hybrid spaces of childhood in Adichie's Purple Hibiscus'" (Adesanmi X). Adichie's realistic writing style is a product of third generation novelist's way of writing. Picus Adesanmi speaks about Jare Bryce's half and half children' which offers a panoramic overview of the new ways that fictions were written by the women writers of the third generation. Purple Hibiscus is set in the South Eastern Nigerian towns of Enugu, Nsukka, and Abba, which are predominantly Igbo in ethnicity. The main protagonist, Kambili Achike, almost sixteen, narrates her family life and history in modern day Nigeria. She brings the reader into her family's palatial homes in the town of Enugu, where her father Eugene Achike runs various businesses, in Abba, She describes about her fanatically religious father, her paternal ancestral home that the family visits every Christmas. Kambili is extremely close to her mother, Beatrice, and her older brother and only sibling, Jaja. A fanatically religious patriarch, Eugene overexerts his children academically. Kambili and Jaja often seek refuge from him in Nsukka, a university town, from the middle of the novel where their paternal aunt, Ifeoma, and her children live. Ifeoma, a university lecturer, tries to counterbalance Eugene's excesses and often urges an entrapped and abused Beatrice to leave him. Beatrice, however, is reluctant to do so, afraid to leave the security Eugene's immense wealth and social status affords her and the children. In the end, though, Eugene pushes Beatrice to the limit and she, in turn, poisons him. To protect his mother, Jaja, admits to the crime of poisoning his father. The novel ends with Jaja in prison, but with the prospect of freedom in the near future.

Keywords: liberation, oppression, patriarchy, domestic violence

Introduction

The forms of oppression experience by African women are different from that of European women. In an interview Fatima Babiker brings out how the history of African women is history of oppression hysterically determined by colonialism. Even before colonialism women oppression existed where there existed in from of female sexual slavery where merchants owned female slaves and were made to service the army. Like the western feminist

movement. There also occurred African feminist movement which was the result of colonialism unlike the western feminist movement which was a fight for liberation, African feminist movement mainly fought for independence from colonization to fight as a separate group.

Purple Hibiscus

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian author who lives in The USA. Adichie is the fast growing

versatile writer who has written short stories, book length essays and three great novels. At the age of eight or nine when she read Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* she says she felt it as a glorious shock of discovery where the characters there were Igbo, eating yams and inhabited a world similar to hers. This influenced her greatly which made her write stories like *Purple Hibiscus* *Purple Hibiscus*, her first novel is setup in post-colonial period.

The heroine is 15 year-old Kambili who is raised in a very uptight, almost delusional, rich Catholic family in Nigeria. The family is run by tyrannical Papa, who is truthfully a very frustrating and depressing character, because he doesn't just abuse. He abuses in the name of God and cries like he's forced to by divine hands. At the beginning Kambili is so reserved and so in awe of her father, that as the narrator, she doesn't tell the story as it is. She slowly unwinds her true feelings towards her father as the story develops. It feels like she tries to hide the fact that her father isn't the perfect guy she desperately believes and wants him to be. That's probably why for the first half of the book is almost static.

As central characters, apart from Kambili's immediate family: Jaja her older brother, Papa and Mama, there are Auntie Ifeoma and her three children, and Papa-Nnukwu Papa and Auntie Ifeoma's father, Kambili's grandfather play a big part in showing Kambili and Jaja the real world, the other world, just a different world with the one they've been living. Amaka try to shake Kambili to open her eyes, to stop yearning for approvals from her father, to see things as they are. On the other hand, she pities her and probably understands in some ways. Fortunately their relationship develops through their stay together.

At the first level of reading, *Purple Hibiscus* appears to be a simple work of adolescent fiction. The novel's setting is in the revolutionary era of Nigeria. This setting takes it beyond the scope of most modern adolescent fiction to a feminist level where Beatrice, Kambili's mother just have the position of being just the wife of a big shot in the society. She is being beaten up brutally by her

husband, which even causes abortion. Kambili and Jaja face political uncaring environment and strict home life.

Eugene, Kambili's father is praised by the society to be a true Christian who strictly follows the Christian rules and lavishes his money for the needy and Christian purposes but on the other side he is strict rather cruel, patriarchal father and husband who subjugates his wife and treats his children like dolls and are made to act according to his wishes. Eugene's wife is very grateful to Eugene as Eugene does not marry another woman as Beatrice, Eugene's wife has only two offspring but the actual reason for her not having more children is Eugene's brutality as he beats her brutally when she is pregnant and kills the baby. The idea of disowning a wife and her kids because she is not able to give birth to more children itself is a very bad sign of patriarchal domination domestic violence. Eugene plays the role of a master, a ring master in particular than a father or husband. Beatrice, who has bared al the tortures of Eugene, is pushed to the extent of killing her husband from being a dedicated wife. He is not a good son either while he deserts his father as he follows paganism.

Ifeoma, Eugene's sister stands as an icon of feminism where she is independent of any man. She takes care of her and her three kids. She also takes care of her father. Her financial independence gives a position for aunt Ifeoma where she boldly points out the mistakes of her brother.

Beatrice is another major victim of Eugene's domestic violence. Beatrice does not enjoy the actual position of a wife instead she is just a status symbol for Eugene. She is treated like a child, not in the right sense but in a dominating way where she is not the better half and the g submissive, sober, dominate wife who is made to obey her husband's rules. Once when Beatrice is pregnant she feels very sick where she is unable to visit the pastor's house but Eugene insists and compels her to meet the father even after she visiting the pastor, Eugene does not forgive her. He attacks her violently to the extent where her baby gets aborted and she gets hospitalized. She gets beaten to the core where the blood kept dripping over

the floor when Kambili says “I sat down closed my eyes and started to count. Sometimes it was over before I even got to twenty. I was at nineteen when the sounds stopped” (Adichie 33). This shows how it was casual and usual for Beatrice to get beaten up by her husband. The first and foremost scene of the fiction itself is a scene of domestic violence.

The first scene itself shows how Eugene is a terrible patriarchy. Eugene’s patriarchal behavior is so violent that his own children prepare themselves to protect his child from him. “Mama is pregnant, I said. Jaja closed his eyes for a while and then opened then. ‘We will take care of the baby we will protect him’. I know that Jaja meant from Papa” (Adichie 23). This portrays the extremes of terrible patriarchy. Silence is the other major thing that rules Eugene’s house hold which proves his strict domination. Silence can be viewed as another important character in the novel. When Ade Coker says that they are so quiet Eugene becomes so proud. That he says that his children are not like those loud children people who have no fear of god. Eugene’s household shows the strict and monotonous life style led by wealthy man in the name of discipline Kambili finds it very difficult and does not utter even a single word unnecessarily too there even her family. This continues even after Eugene’s death. Jaja and Kambili mostly speak through their eyes then through their mouth.

When she speaks about her father Kambili says. “There were stories in his eyes that I would never know” (Adichie 42). This longing sentence shows the longings of a daughter to know about her father, which she is deprived off. Eugene has stiffened them and suppressed them to the extent that even when the children are outside their house in a different surrounding their minds stick to the rules and schedules their father assigned. They are not able enjoy even the meager entertainments like watching T.V when Kambili and Jaja visit Aunt Ifeoma’s house Kambili feels, “I felt as if my shadow were visiting Aunty Ifeoma and her family, while the real was studying in my room in my home schedule posted

above me when others were watching TV” (Adichie 125). Kambili still feels like studying.

Jaja, Kambili and Beatrice equally face domestic violence where when Jaja was ten, Eugene cut his left little finger as he had missed two questions on his catechism that and was not named the best in his first holy communism class. The concepts of freedom and oppression in this novel are in a way ironic where Eugene Kambili’s father, fights for the freedom of the country. He stands as a brave man who opposes the government and who helps the needs but at the same time, he is the suppressor in his household. Through Eugene Kambili reveals the problem in the entire society.

According to the writer this fiction is a critical presentation of the oddities in Nigeria as well as Africa in general the introduction speaks about the writers, Adichie in particular who bring out the traumatic condition or situation of Africa. The article showcases Eugene’s protagonist father’s unnecessary religious conflicts hates his father, for being a heathen. The child in Kambili questions the unnecessary prohibitions of her father which deprived them of actual presentation.

Kambili’s father can be seen as a translated man who gets things mixed up because of obstinacy and transaction of values. In Eugene’s case he creates religious conflicts where he goes to the extent of hating his own father in the name of religion. There is a big deal of oppression and freedom discussed in this novel. Ade Coker, Eugene’s chief editor dies in his struggle for freedom where he keeps on writing boldly against the government when the other papers fear to do that. Adichie portrays Kambili’s family as a miniature of suppression.

Kambili draws a comparison and contrast between her father and the military government where she feels, “Of course papa told us, the politicians were corrupt...but what we Nigerians needed was not soldiers ruling us, what we needed was a renewed democracy, Renewed Government” (Adichie 25). These lines made Kambili to expect a renewed approach to the family affairs first before hoping for the renewed governance in the country.

Kambili experiences freedom in Auntie Ifeoma's house in which she takes time to enjoy. *Purple Hibiscus* is a coming of age story in which Kambili not only grows from adolescence but also from innocence to experience. The bildungsroman theme is the theme mainly associated with the third generation African writers.

"I noticed the ceiling first, how low it was. I felt I could reach out and touch; it was so unlike home where the high ceilings gave our rooms an airy Stillness" (Adichie 113).

The high walls in Kambili's house refer to obstruction and prison kind of life style. Red color refers to bloodshed, anger and violence where the worse impact of red color is shown throughout the novel. When Beatrice has a miscarriage, Kambili finds everything to be turning to blood red color "The words in my text books kept turning into blood each time. I read them" (Adichie 37). whereas purple color is associated with royalty, self-expression of freedom.

Kambili and Beatrice, Jaja also suffers the patriarchal domination. Eugene tortures him in the name of discipline Jaja retaliates and opposes his father. Jaja boldly starts opposing him. After staying in his aunt's house, Jaja protests against his father. The beginning of the novel itself shows this, "Things starts to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja did not go to communion and papa flung his heavy missal across the room & break the figurines ... (Adichie 3), He is the one who bravely acknowledges Eugene's fault,

Adichie has bridged gaps and introduced new motifs and narrative varieties that have energized contemporary African fiction, making her the "most engaging voice of her era." Adichie questions the one lens or solitary view that is frequently applied by modern researchers and critics in the process of evaluating African literature by presenting new literary tales.

Adichie has represented two types of women in *Purple Hibiscus*, the good woman and the real woman. Beatrice is the good woman and Aunt Ifeoma is the real woman. Mama suffered abuse from

her husband even though it put her life in danger and resulted in the loss of her pregnancy, but Ifeoma is the type of woman who doesn't fear anyone and will speak up when anything is wrong. She purposefully portrayed Mama as submissive and silent at the start of the book, but towards the finish, she took a more extreme stance to demonstrate that, as will be covered in more detail shortly, she is capable of acting when pushed to her limits

The figurine is one of the symbols of suppression. Mama Beatrice cleans the figurines every time she is beaten up by Eugene. when the figurine is damaged, Kambili worries how Beatrice would handle her feelings if they argue. It is clear that Beatrice is left with little choice but to look for ways to cope with the suffering and humiliation she endures at the hands of her husband.

Adichie might be able to justify the breach of the figurine feasible at the start of the book to try and find a way to take a stance and defend her rights. She refused to replace it, even when her daughter asked. This is the author's conscious attempt to ensure that the woman does not constantly seek ways to conceal the humiliation and degradation she endures.

Conclusion

In this novel, Adichie boldly represents the looming terror of the state as well as the intimacy of its rider. The public political violence which characterizes the non-democratic life is made visible at several critical moments. The novel is less explicitly a political novel than a tale of brutality. One of the most well-known Nigerian authors of recent years, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, has opened doors for upcoming writers by encouraging them to reevaluate issues and write about topics that white writers had historically always appropriated to demonstrate their intellectual superiority. She has distinguished herself as a liberal feminist.

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EXPLORING INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND IDENTITY IN OCEAN VUONG'S *ON EARTH WE ARE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS*

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Abstract

On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong is a novel that delves deep into the profound exploration of identity, familial relationship and intergenerational trauma. This novel explicates about the protagonist "Little Dog", his journey of self-discovery and healing. This is a semi-autobiographical novel, portraying Vuong's own experience on growing up as a Vietnamese-American immigrant. Though the author shares a similar experience with the protagonist of the novel, it is a work of fiction blending the elements of personal history with imaginative storytelling. The novel reflects on the impact of the American-Vietnamese War by exploring its after-effects and the intergenerational trauma inflicted upon the families due to loss of identity and the struggle to reconcile with the present. The war itself is not the central focus of the novel but the aftermath of people facing life is analysed deeply. One such experience of a person is written by Vuong in this novel through the protagonist Little Dog, a young man of late 20's who writes a series of letters to his illiterate mother. Though his mother can't read them, he writes those letters in a way to communicate his feelings, emotions and experiences of life. Through his mother and grandmother he inherits a legacy of pain, loss and displacement caused by the war. The understanding of his family's past and his struggle to reconcile his Vietnamese heritage with his American identity is reflected through his letters. Vuong paints a vivid picture of love, loss and the search for belonging.

Keywords: multiculturalism, intergenerational trauma, migration, relationship, language, identity, sexuality, discrimination

Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* is a debut novel published on 2019. He is a Vietnamese American poet, essayist, and novelist. He has received numerous awards including T.S. Eliot Prize Whiting Award, Pushcart Prize etc. He is best known for his poetry collection *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* published in 2016. Vuong's writing style is characterized by vivid imagery and emotional depth. His works often explore themes of identity, trauma and healing, relationship and struggles. While discussing about his novel *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* he said "Fiction is strongest when it launches a moral question. When it goes out and seeks to answer. The questions that we couldn't ask in life because the costs would be too much. Fiction and narrative art give us a vicarious opportunity to see these questions play out, at no true cost to our own."

The novel delves deep into the central idea of how trauma can be passed down through generations

known as "Intergenerational Trauma". The novel is structured as a letter form, from the protagonist Little Dog who is a man of late 20's to his mother Rose. She is an illiterate who cannot read. Despite, knowing that his mother will never be able to understand what he has written, he writes a series of letters to articulate his emotions and feelings forming a way to communicate what is stored in his mind. The narrative moves between past and present, where the protagonist goes down to his memory lane when he was living with his mother and grandmother during his childhood.

Little Dog states that his purpose of writing was that he wants to go back to the past to make his mother understand that he has been enduring and observing the struggles of his mother. He also writes this letter to "break free" like monarch butterflies that flies to the south every year during its migration. He tries to deliver his emotions through

his letters on the complexities of being caught between two different cultures, his grandmother Lan worked as a prostitute back during American-Vietnamese War. Since his mother Rose's birth, she went through lot of struggles for being different from the Vietnam people. Racial discrimination served as an important factor that traumatized his mother for being different from either of the countries, where she was never given a proper tag of being called as "American" or "Vietnamese". This trauma passed on to her son, through his letters he tries to empathize with his mother that she has not been alone through this journey, stating that he has also struggled facing similar pain and grief.

Additionally, Little Dog talks about his personal trauma through his letters about his queerness of gender identity. At the age of fourteen, he worked in a tobacco farm where he met a boy named Trevor and had an intimate relationship. His relationship with Trevor paved way for facing another trauma of gender discrimination. This played a central role through his journey of self-discovery and acceptance. After Trevor's death due to over dosage of drug, he laments about his loss. The novel also focuses on the power of language and education. Rose had never given an opportunity to read and write due to the serious conflict between Americans and Vietnamese during that period of time. After immigrating to America, she always insisted his son Little Dog to speak in English. They struggled during their initial settling period in America where they were not able to communicate with other people in the country. Eventually, he started to learn and communicate with others.

The novel reflects on the intergenerational trauma faced by the families during the period of war due to the loss of cultural identities and the struggles to reconcile with the past and the present. During his childhood days, he always observed how his mother

acts and survives through the day-to-day process of enduring pain and struggles. He once read that those suffering from Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) will most likely to abuse their children. He says that hence it is true since his mother always abused him throughout his childhood. He remembers reassuring his mother that she was not a monster but he now opens up through his letter that he was lying. Though he never understood why she behaves such a way during that period of time, he slowly started to understand when he tried to empathize with his mother.

Vuong's central idea portrayed through this novel *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous*, revolves around experiences of Vietnamese immigrants in America. Through the protagonist Little Dog's point of view, the author tries to portray the pain, grief and emotions felt by the people who emigrated to different places for the sake of survival and for the search of identity and belongingness. The novel concludes with Little Dog's letter to his mother expressing his love and pain endured throughout the period of time. Through this letter, he confronts about the pain and beauty of their shared history. Overall, the novel offers a poignant exploration of intergenerational trauma and identity blending with the narrative of memories, confessions and reflection on love and loss. Ocean Vuong's lyrical prose invites readers to empathize with the complexities faced by people through their experiences of pain and healing. The novel contemplates on the lasting impact of trauma on individuals and communities.

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ETHNICITY AND OPPRESSION IN KAVITA KANE'S THE FISHER QUEEN'S DYNASTY

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Abstract

In the The Fisher Queen's Dynasty, Kavita Kane examines the Mahabharata's mythical character Satyawati's ethnicity and Hegemonic oppression based on class, caste and gender. Despite being the daughter of a Fisherman raises to become the Queen of the Guru dynasty who Portrayed as a strong, independent woman in Mahabharata. Trace of Satyawati is less in Mahabharata but plays a key role in shaping the great epic Mahabharata. Satyawati is anxious for the cause subjected to caste discrimination so she decides to restore her identity by taking Hastinapur by joining hands with King Shantanu as husband with a great demand for throne for her heirs. She transfers the oppression into hegemony with her boldness for Guru dynasty. Though many criticism arose about Satyawati for marrying King Shantanu she faces the challenges by her courage and uniqueness. kavita Kane focuses on Satyawati's point of view to examine the status of Outcast towards the caste consciousness is widespread at the time. Kane explores the unknown Satyawati in the role of a social reformer by drawing the attention by her audience to the societies abusive behavior. She further highlights the ability to fictionally recount the contemporary events through the myth.

Keywords: ethnicity, race, myth, oppression

Introduction

Ethnicity refers to a sense of identity and membership in a group that shares common language, cultural traits and a sense of a common history. Most such groups feel to varying degrees the intensity of where their way of life, their food, dress, habits, beliefs, values are superior to those of other groups. The significant quality of ethnicity is that it can be flexible and transformable. People can change or enhance their ethnicity by learning, assimilating into another culture. Ethnic identity is acquired and ethnic features are learned forms of identity that is perceived as innate and unalterable. Ethnic may be transient and even superficial where Race is a invented, fictional form of Identity.

Kavita Kane's female characters protest their voices towards the patriarchal traditions. These characters create a great lines distancing themselves from patriarchal anxieties and gender ideologies. As these lines transform into magnanimous attack and

revenge on patriarchal social structure. Kane goes a step forward and becomes the 'woman with a mission'. So through her women protagonist she retells the unknown women who are marginalized, misunderstood, misrepresented, and literally abused in mythologies. However, Kane's novel attempts to deeply analyze how the female characters emancipate themselves from the oppression caused by the social norms and the circumstances in which women had to face identity crisis.

Kavita Kane weaves themes of Gender, Race, oppression and hegemony in her book 'The Fisher Queen Dynasty'. She uses the mythical narratives to create revisionist fiction method used by contemporary Indian writers like Chitra Banerjee, Devdutta Pattanaik and Koral Dasgupta. But Kavita Kane's writing are notable for depicting the issues of modern society. The two great epic highlights the valours of male characters and greatness with few female characters. Recent writers attempt to focus on

minor characters whose role are very less but prominent for the move of epic. Women's of Mahabharata were known for sacrifice, tolerance and submissiveness towards the male characters but Kane's Satyavati refuses to be a Pliable wife. She is too indomitable to be marginalized by the male-dominated society.

The epic Mahabharata served as an inspiration to foresee the sociological perspectives and highlights the issues from the protagonist point of view. She retells the story of a fisher girl name Satyavati, an illegitimate child of Vasu, was married to the King of Hastinapur, named Shantanu the great king of Guru Dynasty. The paper investigates the challenges faced by Satyavati as a low caste girl and changes the destiny of Guru dynasty by her courage, confidence and unives for her caste.

Kane describes how Satyavati raised from oppression and violence to a queen of the Guru Dynasty. She attempts to modify the traditional perception of mythical tales, which has largely neglected caste and gender tales, which has largely neglected caste and gender issues, author focuses Satyavati's point of view to examine the status of outcast towards the caste consciousness was widespread at the time.

Kapila Joshi and Kaushal Sharma in their article 'Dreams, Desires and Destiny in the Fisher Queen's Dynasty justifies Satyavati as follows:

"Satyavati is portrayed as a victim of a system, which can be defined as " a form of differentiation wherein the constituent units of the system justify endogamy on the basis of putative biological difference which are Semaphore by the ritualization of multiple social practices "(Joshi and Sharma)

Kane reveals Satyavati's birth and adoption in her book which uncovers the victims of Social issues. Uparichar Vasu, the king of Chedi, treated Adrika, Satyavati's mother, as an outcast Lady. Despite her poverty King Vasu demanded her to fulfill his desires. She is victimized for her poverty to satisfy his desires. He seduced, impregnated and left her, to this cause one of the Royal illegitimate children is Satyavati.

A Fisherman raises Satyavati in a poor socio economic background. Later he reveals her past saying her real father is King Vasu who cheated her mother for his desire and ignored her by accepting her twin brother and sending her away with fisherman Dashraj. Once the King's men ridicule and suspect her for the robbery She experiences anger and frustration for the suspicion of a lady from lower social class who is subjected to hegemonic oppression based on class, caste and gender. Satyavati says,

" if they have enough evidence to suspect me of stealing, then they can imprison me, strip me naked, and search me, the lead me through the roads with an armed guard of troops, and finally cast me into a cold prison basement with rats and woodlice, just like the dungeons in which deposed monarch are punished." (Kane, 5)

The lines exposes the cruelty and violence towards lower class and also reveals Satyavati state. Her father abandons her because she is a girl and as, "king need prince, not princess! If it had been to him he would have probably drowned you in the river "(Kane,31) Where her brother grows up as a prince in her father's palace, she is destined to sell fish and ferrous people "(Kane,32). It is pity where she is denied for birthright for being a girl. The truth motivated her desire to earn her birthright in some way. Dashraj promises, I shall make you the Royal princess that you are"(Kane,5)

Being a Fishery girl everyone called her Matsyagandha and treated as untouchable because her body smells like rotten fish. Everyone moves away from her for the nauseating body smell in addition she looks dark as kali. She is treated as a pariah, the lowest of the low (Kane,11) Though she is young, intelligent she never gets any sort of respect. This experience makes her resentful of the patriarchal society. However Dashraj states, "You were born to rule "(Kane,19). Parashar the Rishi with his mystical powers makes love with her and gives her a boon so that he can transform her from Matsyagandha to Yojanagandha, from a 'foul smelling girl' to a charming scented girl.

So Satyawati vows to herself that she 'would not be the conquest of a man (Kane, 59) She wants power. She wants to rule and not be ruled. When Hastinapur's king Shantanu express his love for her, she takes of the opportunity to become a queen. But it is not easy for her as she is not a princess but a daughter of a fisher king. She has to manipulate him to marry her. Dashraj traps Devarat to become a celibate in the future and Satyawati's children become heirs to the kingdom of Hastinapur. But Satyawati persuade Dashraj not to do injustice for Devarat. "For the first time in her young life, Kali felt guilty "(Kane, 93). Instead of generalizing Vyasa's Satyawati as good or bad, Kane delves deep into her mind and debunks the affectionate heart of a woman. As she is denied her birthright as a queen because of his father's gender discrimination but she felt guilty for denying Devarat's birthright as a future king of Hastinapur. So she felt for the Devarat.

When Shantanu tells her to obey his commands as he is also her king, she says to Shantanu, "I am your wife, your Queen "(kane,139).Satyawati with her intelligent mark as a queen she raises her voice also against the marginalization of the fisher community.she orders Shantanu to treat their fisher community as equal and offers position in court. She says "treat them with the dignity they deserve "(Kane, 139). This create a conflict for King Shantanu and peoples of Hastinapur. They were displeased for the position for Desharaj in courtand provide all amenities and empowers them.She believes in equality,not in discrimination based on colour, race, caste. Though she became the queen of the dynasty she still remembers her people allows them to visit the court and deal with affairs. Thus She becomes the voice of the marginalized people and fights for their rights. She is well portrayed as a responsible queen of the dynasty.

Soafter the marriage with Shantanu she has to face everyone's grievance in Hastinapur because she has bereaved Devarat made him a celibate so people cursed her for the cause. Second thing people further delineated her for her low birth as a fisher girl who used to call her as Matsyagandha. So they called her

Daseyi to remind her state as a fisher girl. The people of Hastinapur start protesting against their new queen. But with her confidence, she tactfully wins her controversy with sharp intelligence. Kane writes, "saw how she had won, going straight into the battle field but not shedding a drop of blood "(Kane, 148)

Though people protest against her for dethroning Devarat King Shantanu understands the ability and strength of Satyawati and recognizes her competence to rule the dynasty. As Shantanu dreams come true after his death as she ruled the great dynasty Hastinapur skillfully. ThoughUgrayudh proposed her for second marriage she denies his offer and says "I am married to Hastinapur. I need no king, I will be it's queen, and the man she is married to will be the king of Hastinapur. She needs no king, as Bhisma is always there to protect Hastinapur and her. She doesn't want to lose Hastinapur to any King. She will never lose "sovereignty as Queen" (Kane, 188)

Thus Kane reflects modern incidents through her protagonists in a view to contextualize certain key issues. Rathod in his article highlights current issues as follows, "In India, the incidents of stripping the poor woman naked and beating her are common even in the twenty first century. The writer denotes such caste-based discriminatory violent incidents occurring all over India. The novel was published in 2017. It is noticeable that there were more than ten incidentof such atrocities that occurred in the same year." (Rathod,71). These lines shows the writer as a social reformer who draws the attention of the readers toward the class discrimination and misuse of hegemonic patriarchal society.It clearly shows the caste consciousness prevailing in India where lower caste people are subjected to injusticeand die to their poverty and helplessness. Hence the mythical unknown character Satyawati protests against the class based injustices. She exemplifies how the woman from the lower strata of society were exploited by the politicallypowerful. In spite of her injustice with her Satyawati protest against patriarchal injustices. Rathod in his article says, "To resist against the patriarchal and caste- based norms of society, Satyawati becomes ambitious to grab power".

(Rathod, 72) Thus the society humiliates Satyavati's privilege's so she decided to improve her social status. So she uses her body as a site to manifest her power relation in future but to gain upward mobility in the social structure of her time.

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REPRESSION AND RESILIENCE: A STUDY ON AHALYA'S AWAKENING BY KAVITA KANE

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Abstract

Women are viewed by feminist critics as the non-elite subalterns of society since men who hold positions of leadership marginalize and oppress them. Similar to the Sudras in the social hierarchy, women were regarded as men's property under the old rules; they were deprived of voice agency. This study examines Ahalya, a minor, unimportant female figure from mythology, and how Kavita Kane's Ahalya's Awakening transforms her as a whole different narrative voice from the main Epic narratives. The main plot of Kane's story is focused on bringing Ahalya back to selfhood from her initial marginalized status. She continues to be a minor character in the epic Ramayana, a little figure whose existence is claimed to emphasize the divinity of the ascetic strength of her husband Rishi and the masculine protagonist Ram Gautam and, most of all, to reinstate the stringent regulations pertaining to women sexuality. Her story, which was overlooked in the first epic, is highlighted and told again in Ahalya's Awakening in her own voice. The paper looks into how Kane's rewriting of the text contradicts the androcentric plot of the Ramayana and provides a further rationale for Ahalya's identity as a subjugated.

Keywords: *subjugation, resistance, androcentric narrative*

Group of persons in the social hierarchy who are under the control of the powerful and who are not allowed to have a voice within the system is implied by the term "subaltern." In today's world, where granting power and equality to those who are excluded is the top priority, the idea of the subaltern has become crucial. The word "subaltern" was first used by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci in his Prison Notebook to refer to workers and members of the lower classes who were deprived of their fundamental rights. Investigating the voice of the subaltern was his motivation for researching the idea. He recognized a country's prejudices against the subordinate and thought its historical narratives favoured the ruling class. An individual or a group of people in the society suffering under the superiority domination and were denied of all the basic amenities in the society.

Gramsci opines that the subjugated population or class does not have a political voice in a

hegemonic order. Because they have been pushed out of the mainstream ideology, their history echoes in mainstream history. The term "subaltern" was later adopted in India by Ranajit Guha, the founder and member of the Subaltern Studies Group, in contrast to the elitist idea of writing history during the period of colonialism. He argues that the Indian capitalists lacked to sufficiently represent the nation and that their rule ignored a great deal of the population's awareness and way of life. The Subjugated group employed the term "subaltern" in the Indian context to refer to the marginalized and lower/minority classes whose voices have been suppressed historically. Additionally, he recognized the widespread belief that subaltern communities resist the dominant class.

Gayatri Spivak used the term "subaltern" to refer to women in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?", wherein she speaks of third-world women as being both oppressed and voiceless. She goes on to say that

a female subaltern has significantly greater suffering than a male. Because of the patriarchal power that currently exists, subaltern. In the gender hierarchy, women are categorized as non-elite or lower class due to the years of oppression and exploitation at the hands of males, as well as their marginalization as the other. Women may be viewed as "subalterns" in the patriarchal social framework as a whole because they have historically been denied voice. In India, the development of current Hinduism frequently stems from mythology, tales, and old texts. The magnificent tales of Rama, the Pandavas, Sita, and Draupadi are known to society, and these antiquated accounts are held in the highest regard. A myth is typically an ancient narrative of supposedly historical events that explains a behavior, belief, or natural occurrence or helps to reveal a portion of a people's worldview. Retelling stories in the modern era has challenged the recurring themes found in legendary tales. Revisionist approaches seek to reinterpret the gaps and silences in the narrative approach, whether they are found in mythology or history, both of which are told from an independent point of view.

The mythological female characters cannot be acknowledged, explained, or interpreted by such writing or rendition of elite or androcentric presentation. Women writers question the gender inequality that myth perpetuates through revisionist mythmaking. In response to the androcentric presentation of mythological texts, feminist retellings are developed in order to challenge the sexism that has suppressed women and to upend the hierarchical structure. Adrienne Rich states that retellings are essential, saying that re-vision is an act of looking back for women. It is a component of our rejection of the male-dominated society's self-destructiveness. An idealized image of a woman in epic literature is one of quiet, forgiveness, silence, and submission devoted to her partner. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to examine a mythological lady character from below, focusing on her voiceless state. Hindu mythology's female characters, who are portrayed in line with the Brahmanical laws' depiction of female identity, are silent and speechless. This paper will

examine Ahalya's marginalized voice in the Ramayana and discuss how Kavita Kane's *Ahalya's Awakening* affirms the female voice as a counternarrative to the dominant onediscussion of the first epic

Many retellings or revisions of Valmiki's Ramayana are made in an attempt to challenge the established customs that uphold Hindu dharma and specifically target women. The novel *Ahalya's Awakening* by Kavita Kane is unique in that it gives Ahalya, a figure who was barely mentioned in the Ramayana, a voice of her own. This mythological figure never had her importance mentioned, and she is voiceless in the epic. Lord Rama requested for a hermitage near the Mithila to Guru Vishwamitra. Vishwamitra suggested a place where Ahalya lived and was cursed by Gautama for having an illicit relationship with Lord Indra. Gautama cursed by saying that she will have to live here for many thousands of years. She will torture herself with austerities, living only on air and going without meals. She'll slumber upon ashes. All other creatures won't be able to observe her living in this hermitage. She shall be cleansed at the arrival of Dasharatha's son, the victorious Rama, in this horrible wilderness. She, the one with a malevolent nature, will no longer be confused or avaricious when he stays with her. After that, her own shape will return. Her story's primary purpose by Vishwamitra was to warn Ram about sexuality and to impart knowledge.

This statement by Vishwamitra actually highlights the "dangerous and frightening nature of women. The message conveyed was sexuality is ubiquitous in adulthood, under the control of women, and a danger to men. The traditional means of controlling women is through marriage. Men from elite family portrayed women to lust and sensuality. As a result, Vishwamitra imparted to Lord Rama lessons on sexuality and its effects on society through the narrative of Ahalya. Reimagining Ahalya's tale from the Ramayana is *Ahalya's Awakening*, giving voice to the mute, voiceless woman whose desires had to be satisfied by penance. It emphasizes the androcentric narrative of the

mythical texts and offers a novel interpretation by telling the story from her point of view. The story follows Ahalya from a young age, showcasing her remarkable love of learning, her ambitious personality, her marriage, and her love life. It also goes into great detail about her husband's curse, the circumstances that led to her infidelity, and her rejection to accept another man's atonement.

In order to counter the popular narrative that portrays Ahalya as discriminatorily represented in Valmiki's Ramayana, Ahalya's character must be reclaimed and her narrative reflected upon. Ahalya is portrayed as a minor character in Valmiki's Ramayana. She is regarded as the first lady created by Brahma, and Rishi Gautama subsequently received her. Her notoriety does not stem from the fact that she is a woman whose existence was intended merely to demonstrate the capabilities of the might of her husband, Rishi Gautama, and the divinity of the main character, Ram. Her tale also serves as a cautionary tale for women across time about the repercussions of adultery and betrayal. She is victimized by the authority of male power and remains a supporting character without a voice throughout the epic narrative. Is Ahalya able to speak? Is her voice audible? Does she have the right to want and feel pleased? Why does the Ramayana by Valmiki not give her any space? Our understanding of the mythological stories is shaped by questions that suggest they are mostly the stories of men, elevating the status of women who complied with social norms. It is important to rewrite the classical epics in order to challenge the elitist history that firmly established the highest Hindu philosophy regarding the laws and guidelines that must be observed. At the onset of the narrative, Menaka informs King Nahusha of his secret affections for Indra Shakra's wife Sachi. After seducing Rishi Gautama's wife and engaging in adultery, Menaka informed King Nahusha of Indra Shakra's death. King Mudgal and his spouse Nalayani welcomed the most exquisite daughter, Ahalya, into the world. Given that she was born a princess and married a Brahmin the highest social class within the

Brahmanical community she is presumably upper middle class. Her eligibility for subaltern studies may be compromised as a result. Ahalya's position as a voice of the underprivileged is situated within the patriarchal system and the Brahmanical social structure, which promotes male dominance over women in society.

Women's presence in subaltern groups is a chance to reexamine "minority histories," as defined by Dipesh Chakrabarty, which encompass all historical periods in which "the democratically-minded historians have battled against the nation's dominant narratives' omissions and exclusions (Chakravathy 473). Because they contradict the dominant historical narratives, they are referred to as "minority histories" (Chakravathy 473). The main storyline primarily emphasizes important people, such as Sita, from various angles. But a figure like Ahalya is accustomed to create a rift in the story's structure by pushing a message of adultery and promiscuity. Women's physical attractiveness is used to judge them, and this becomes a status symbol for them. It has become the identity of a woman to be valued and adored for her beauty rather than her other qualities.

Her mother fervently desired for Ahalya to be connected to Indra from the moment of her birth. "The beautiful one without blemishes" was how Rishi Vashisht referred to her when he named her Ahalya (Kane 8). Ahalya was gifted, even though she was in her brother's shadow. She questioned Rishi Vashisht, asking why the earth is called a mother and not a father. The old traditions, which showed no signs of bending, shook at the sound of her loud voice.

Ahalya's voice has been muffled, defeated, and contained by Valmiki's authoritative narrative by mentioning her sexual preference. In "Conceptualizing Brahmanical Patriarchy in Early India," Uma Chakravarti looks at the epics' and rocentric narrative and how little attention is paid to the roles and experiences of women. She ends by writing, "If women have not been portrayed in a fitting light, it is because of misogyny and

chauvinism, which made us all narrow-minded and kept us from realizing the incredible strength and conviction of these women." (Chakravarti 11).

Strong, observant, wise, and unyielding is Kane's Ahalya. She thinks brains is more important than appearance, and she frequently corrects Indra when he shows his enthusiasm for her attractiveness. She was not a simple mark. She had no desire to be recognized as the world's most gorgeous woman. And she continued, "But how many see that? Intelligence is discounted and kindness is disregarded. The majority wouldn't recognize or accept the intelligence and wisdom hidden underneath a woman's alluring appearance or loveliness?(Kane 40). A cunning or seducing man such as Indra sees only the attractive body and not the intelligence. Her preference for study above marriage demonstrated that she was a wise woman who understood the value of education. Another instance where she defied social convention was when she asked Swayamwar's intentions when her family as a whole wanted Indra to be her spouse. "I will have to be won," she declared I am the prize trophy that will be given to this pointless competition's winner! (Kane113)drawn to Rishi Gautam's intellect and compassion, who valued her reasoning over her physical attractiveness. Still, after marriage, a slow shift became noticeable, and she was forced to become a conventional wife who served her husband. After her husband neglected her for years because of his saintly responsibilities, she gave in to the delusion of Indra's seduction and paid the price for her sin.

Towards the end, she asks Gautam, who never gave credit for his role in the act, going against how the epic was originally presented. She expresses her dismay at the unjust punishment women receive. Who is accountable for the offense? Whether it's God Indra or Ahalya. In "Sita and Helen, Ahalya and Alcmena," Wendy Doniger states: Although unfaithful women are frequently slain or maimed in the tales, men are the ones who suffer the most consequences for adultery according to The Laws of Manu. Assuming that all women are seductive and all snakes venomous, the woman is regarded as

inherently accountable. But because he is aware that all women are seductive and that a guy who commits adultery is to blame when a woman follows her instincts, males also carry cultural guilt. Future human history will be impacted by this crime and Ahalya and Indra's subsequent punishment. Mythology views restricting female sexuality as essential, as espoused by the Brahmanical laws. In ancient times and in mythical stories, women were suppressed through a variety of cultural beliefs. One such practice was the rigorous control of female libido, which led to the development of the idea that womanhood is predicated on chastity and purity. The idea has a certain paradox because women were both objectified and constrained by moral standards of purity.

The subaltern theory has to be applied to the ancient epics in order to evaluate the extent to which they upheld patriarch supremacy. They connected the epic creation that is androcentric and uses neo-colonialist historiography. Thus, the Ramayana, which is regarded as the main text used to create an ideal society, giving masculine characters and their androgynous stories the upper hand. It is comparable to neo-colonialists in that it attributes all historical credit to British colonial authorities and establishments.

The colonialists (the Centre, the oppressors, and oneself) were categorized as the "stimulus and response" for the marginalized, oppressed, and other "Indian elites." Making the connection: the female characters in the Ramayana were either created to incite conflict or were blamed for significant incidents, albeit not always in the lives of the male protagonists. In addition, Ahalya was blamed for her unbridled libido while her husband was away and for falling for Indra's trickery and delusion. It was crucial to restore the premodern or traditional way of "imagining" the country in anti-colonial politics. This historic pre-modern civilization in India corresponds to Brahmanical Hinduism. Since women were the ones who kept the culture alive, it was also vital to display Hinduism in its purest form in order to promote nationalism. Every time, Ahalya asks, "Do women need special laws?" (Kane 83).

The moral divide between men and women existed even though Gautama thought that laws should treat both sexes equally. More evidence came from the later modification of Indra's curse "after the other gods had begged Gautam." His torso was covered in a thousand eyes instead of vulvas (334–335). Although she was changed into a stone, Indra stayed a god. She had to wait for forgiveness from another man after being cursed by the first one.

Ahalya is designed to be a catalyst for the manifestation of masculine force because she is a woman. Doniger states, "The female sex has never found favour with any of the world's religions, or with their priests and prophets," in another book titled *Hindu Myths* (Wendy 11). It is still widely accepted that Gautama's severe response, or the curse, was appropriate behaviour. Kane considers how Ahalya's humanistic portrayal of her feelings, passions, and desires is done. She is charming, beautiful, and witty, yet she is also flawed and prone to errors. She is strong because she acknowledges the implications of her actions. She also blames her husband, saying that it was he who cursed her for being an unfaithful wife rather than her own shortcomings.

Gautam is asked by her, "And punish me for what? that I had a need that you, as my spouse, were unable to recognize or satisfy? (Kane323). Indra's quick action to flee the scene after Gautam discovered. They assisted her in realizing that Indra's love was really all about his male ego, which had been hurt when she had previously rejected him, rather than any genuine emotion. She would ultimately be the only one shunned by society. She forced herself to resign until she found peace because she refused to accept society's harsh treatment of her.

Kane refutes the claim that Ahalya was an adulterous woman married to a rishi and that her husband cursed her for being unfaithful. She queries if society accepts this kind of identification, asking, "Was that her identity, circumscribed?" by that lone error? (Kane331). She goes on to wonder, "Would anyone hear her scream for justice, her pained wail? Would she always be considered an unbeliever?

(kane335). The author goes on to reveal how Ahalya was taken advantage of by the men in her life: Gautam betrayed her and cursed her for being unfaithful, and Indra was seduced during her most vulnerable period. Ram's redemptive act of her elevated the idea of female subjugation; yet, self-redemption alternates with it. Ahalya chooses to awaken from her spiritual meditation on her own initiative, according to her. Once her spouse curses her, she fights by herself and is deemed guilty by and is left behind by her kids in the society. Deep meditation became her go-to method after feeling let down by society's injustices. She had turned away from society's critical gaze, as Kane puts it. While attempting to find her sense of serenity, she discovered that she was immobile (Kane 331–332). Female desire that has been suppressed is explored in Kane's counter-narrative.

It emphasizes that women shouldn't be restricted by societal norms and that they can have wants. In the book, Ahalya was able to see past the illusion and recognize that Indra was her husband's true form, but she was ultimately seduced by Gautama's physical attraction and indifference. She is "a normal woman with normal needs," the novelist insists (Kane250). After all those years, feeling abandoned, unloved, and angry at Gautam for completely ignoring her and her pain, she ended up in the hands of a guy who still seemed to care about her. Her husband opted to overlook her psychological pain, which is exemplified by her acquiescence. Her ultimate capitulation to the marriage, which compromised her passion and ambition, and Gautam's unspoken demand that she accepts every circumstance in spite of her passions and ambitions and wants further exposed her vulnerabilities. "Could not cherish his wife and restricted her to home-keeping and legal subordination," said the esteemed scholar who enacted legislation to empower and free women from subordination (Kane 324). A woman experiences "imposed conformity" and "eternal expectations" continuously throughout her life (Kane 332). Finally, by bringing Ahalya, a voiceless victim of male hegemony in the canonical Hindu Vedic text, to life,

Kavita Kane's counter-narrative aims to give voice to the oppressed. In Ahalya is reimagined with a voice that challenges the status quo, in contrast to her submissive representation in the classic epic. Because of her sexual desire-which is frowned upon in Indian culture-she is taken advantage of.

Through the story of Ahalya, the author has made a noticeable distinction by elevating the character of the most overlooked and marginalized woman from the epic's periphery. In her work, Kavita Kane tackles the crucial question of why a person like Ahalya is significant in exposing the condition of such subservient women who are used as instruments in patriarchal societies to further the interests of men. Feminist retellings thus question the dominant narrative that is deeply embedded in the classical epic. She deconstructs the story of Ahalya, which was marginalized in favor of the story featuring more well-known characters. She is transformed back into the strong person who embraced her deeds and the consequences, rather than the helpless victim who silently endured the curse placed upon her. Most significantly, by challenging the strict social norms imposed on women, Ahalya transforms into a person who takes

charge of her life and frees herself from male dominance.

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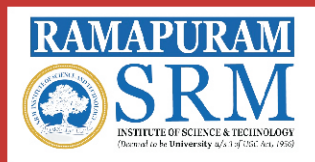
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